

CULTISM IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS: REASONS WHY STUDENTS ENGAGE IN CULTISM, ITS EFFECTS AND CONTROL MEASURES

by

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Abstract

Cultism which can be defined as a ritual practice by a group of people whose membership, admission, policy and initiation formalities as well as their mode of operations and secret activities has been a canker worm which has eaten deep into the fabrics of Nigerian tertiary institutions and society at large. Secret cult activities in higher institutions of learning in Nigeria have major social problems in our society. Students are lured into cult for protection from academic failure, protection from external facilitating winning students (union) election and for many other reasons. In this work, the reasons why students engage in cultism in campuses, the effect of this social menace on the students, society and national development were discussed. Various measures to control the activities of cultists to barely minimal were also discussed. To curb cultism in Nigeria educational system, there is need for collaborative effort of the parents, school, religious organizations and government towards the moral upbringing of their children.

Key words: Cultism, Tertiary institutions, Effects and Measures of control.

Introduction

The essence of education generally is to make people better human beings and create better societies. All over the world, universities have often been regarded and referred to as citadels of learning. But as a result of incessant secret cult activities, these citadels of learning have turned out to be the centers of violence. Nigeria today is the renewal of the menace and aggressiveness of cult activities. Obviously, cultism is said to be the mother of crimes in tertiary

institutions, and this phenomenon has negatively affected the image of our institutions, the learning quality and integrity of the undergraduates. According to Ogunade (2002) secret cult is an enclosed organized association of group devoted to the same cause. It is an enclosed group having an exclusive sacred ideology and series of rites centering around their secret symbols. Cultic activities are sometimes laden with blood which may be the blood of an animal or that of human beings. He claimed that during initiation rites or during rival group clashes within the University setting, blood flows during which many lives are lost in the process.

The Concept of Cultism

The Oxford Concise Dictionary of Sociology (1996) gives the anthropological definition of a cult as a set practices and beliefs of a group in relation to a local god". It also gives a sociological definition of it as small group or religious activities whose beliefs are typically secret, esoteric and individualistic.

Cultism can be defined as a ritual practice by a group of people whose membership, admission, policy and initiation formalities as well as their mode of operations are done in secret and kept secret with their activities having negative effects on both members and non-members alike (Udoh and Ikezu, 2015; Atuoma and Nwosu, 2015; Ajayi *et al.*, 2010).

Ogunade (2002) defined a secret cult as an enclosed organized association or group devoted to the same cause. It is an enclosed group having an exclusive sacred ideology and a series of ties centering on their sacred symbols. Adeyanyu (2001) opines that a cult is secret to the extent that its members, organization rules and modus operandi are supposed to be unknown to non-members. Ogidefa (2008) defined cult as a ritual practice by a group of people whose membership admission policy is initiation formalities as well as their mode of operations are done secret and kept secret, with their activities having negative effect on both members and non-members.

According to Pemedede (2001) secret cult is defined as a group of people engaged in a particular set of worship that involves rituals and an oath that binds them together as one entity. The 1999 constitutions of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in section 318 (a), (b) and (c) however defines secret society (cult) to include any society, association, groups or body of persons (whether registered or not)

- a. That uses secret signs, oaths, rites or symbols and which is formed to promote a course the purpose or part of the purpose of which is to foster the interest of its members and to aid one another under any circumstances

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- without due regard, merit, or injustice to the detriment of the legitimate interest of those who are not members.
- b. The membership of which is compatible with the function or dignity of any public office under this constitution and those members are sworn to observe oaths of secrecy
 - c. The activities of which are not known to public at large, the names of whose members are kept secret and whose meeting and other activities are held in secret. This connotes that the activities and everything that cultists engaged in as regards to their ideology is basically secret and remain open to their members only.

The History/Development of Cultism in Nigeria Tertiary Institutions (1954-2010)

Ogunade (2002) asserted that secret cults in Nigeria higher institutions started as fraternities with the sole aim of maintaining law and order in the campuses. The origin of Cultism in Nigeria tertiary institutions can be traced back to 1952 when Prof. Wole Soyinka, winner of the 1986 Nobel prize for literature and a group of six friends formed the Pirates Confraternity Elite of the University college Ibadan (now called University of Ibadan) when the institution was still a satellite campus of the University of London (Atuoma and Nwosu, 2015; Udoh and Ikezu, 2015). It was formed with the aim of producing future Nigeria leaders who should be very proud of their Africa heritage (Thomas, 2002). They have skull and cross bones as their logo while members adopted confraternity names as ‘‘Capon’ Blood’’ and ‘‘Long John Silver’’ and was made up of few members known as 97. The Pirates confraternity also known as National association of Sea dogs cultivated a style that ridiculed colonial attitude (Adewale, 2005). They proved popular among students even after the original members moved on. Membership was opened to every male student regardless of tribe or race (Atayi, 2002). The original aims of the association were very lofty and noble and of zero degree violence (Thomas, 2002)

The main objectives of the sea dogs have been summarized by Orintusin (1990) to include:

- To fight non-violently but intellectually and effectively, the imposition of foreign conventions to revive the age of chivalry.
- To find lasting solutions to the problem of tribalism and elitism. Professor Wole Soyinka was the first democratically elected ‘Capon blood’ (Orintusin, 1990).

For almost 20 years, the pirate a non-violent body become established in all tertiary institution that emerged in post independent Nigeria as the only confraternity on Nigeria campus. The emergence of campus cult as they are known in Nigeria today began in early 1970s with a split in Pirates confraternity. In 1972 Bolaji Carew and several others were expelled from the pirates for failing to meet the expected standards (Denga, 1986). In reaction to this and other events, the Pirates registered themselves under the name National Association of Seadogs [NAS]. The Buccaneers of Seadogs was founded by Carew. In 1980s confraternities spread over the 30 institutions of higher education in the country.

The Neo-Black movement of Africa [Black Axe] emerged from University of Benin in Edo state while the Supreme Eiyeye confraternity [National Association of Air Lords] broken off from Black Axe in 1983 (Ekwe, 1999). Students at the University of Calabar in cross River State founded the Eternal Fraternal Order of the Legion Consortium [the Klansmens Konfraternity] while a former member of Buccaneers confraternity started the Supreme Vikings confraternity [the Adventures of the De Norsemen Club of Nigeria] the following year (Hank, 1999). In the mid-80s, it had become evident that some of the cults had been adopted as elements in the intelligence and the security services serving the then military government. They were used against students union and University staff who were the only organized groups opposing military rule (Udoh and Ikezu, 2015; Gimba, 2002). In 1984, Prof Wole Soyinka, extricated himself from emerging trend, initiated the abolition of the pirates confraternity in all tertiary institution, by then the phenomena of violent cults had developed a life of its own. He further explained that confraternities are not cults (Diton, 1994). According to him, confraternity was part of social life of the university, which existed then, and as Adegboye (1998) pointed out, some evil mind have twisted the original aims of this noble tradition that was simply one of campus life. Adiamoh, (2003) pointed out that the original confraternity did not swear oath of secrecy, no binding of blood and the identities of members were known to both students and staff. Thomas (2002) asserted that confraternities operated at no degree of violence when they emerged in the 1950's but unfortunately, they were later high jacked by military governments who were anxious to consolidate their holds on University students who might challenge their authorities.

As from the 1990s, the activities of secret cult has taken a horrifying and worrisome dimensions which many criminal activities including murder,

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arson, armed robbery and rape are frequently linked to their members, and lack of discipline (Atuoma and Nwosu, 2015; Udoh and Ikezu, 2015; Oyemwinmina and Aibieyi, 2015). To that extent therefore, many of the purported cultist are actually gangsters or member of crime syndicates hiding under the umbrella of certain secret cults or societies. In early 1990s as the end of the second Republic drew near, confraternity activities expanded dramatically in the Niger Delta as they engaged in a bloody struggle for supremacy. The family confraternity [The campus mafia or The mafia], which modeled itself after the Italian mafia, emerged, shortly after their arrival, several students were expelled from Abia State University for cheating and cultism, a reference to the voodoo-practicing confraternities, which marked the beginning of a shift of confraternity activities from the university to off campus. The Brotherhood of the Blood [also known as Two-Two [Black Beret] another notorious confraternity was founded at Enugu State University of Science and Technology.

Cults established in early 1990s include: Second Son of Satan [SSS], Night Cadet, Sonmen, Mgba Mgba Brothers, Temple of Eden, Trogan Horse, Jurists, White Bishops, Gentlemen Clubs, Fame, Executioners, Dreded Friends, Eagle club, Black Scorpion, Red Sea Horse, Fraternity of Friends The klansmen konfraternity expanded their influence by creating a Street and Creek Wing,, Deebam to expanded their influence by creating a street and Creek wing, Deebam to fight for and control territory outside the Universities through violence and crime. In response, the supreme Vikings Confraternity [SVC] established her own street and creek group, Dewell. When Dewell was unable to match Deebam, the SVC created the second confraternity wing, the Icelanders [German], which was led by militia leader Ateke Tom. The outlaws, another well-known street and creek confraternity began to be formed. These includes the Black Brazier [Black Bra], the Viqueens, Daughters of Jezebel and the Damsel. Female confraternities have supplied spies for all allied male confraternities as well as acted as prostitution syndicates (Mbachu, 2008; Obadere, 2007; Muyiwa, 2001; Onuogha, 1998; Nwachukwu, 1990; Onyehalu, 1986). Offiong (1999) claimed that there are about thirty six different cult groups in Nigerian University campuses which among them include Amazon, Black Axe, Black Devils, Red Devils, Scorpions, Temple of Eden Vampire, Vipers, White Angels, Female cults were not left out, and some of the existing ones include Daughters of Jezebel Amazons, pink Ladies, Vampires, Bats Royal, Queen, White Angels, and Temple of Eden and many others.

It is of interest to note that some of the cults set off originally for good but deviated as time went on. For instance, the pirates confraternity set out to fight muribudun convention, neo-colonialism, tribalism and at the same time, defend humanistic ideas while promoting comradeship and chivalry amongst its members of male groups. Buccaneers set out to pursue the same objective as it came out from pirates. Eiyeye confraternity started out as Eiyeye group with the objective of promoting a balanced physical and mental development with emphasis on sports and academic excellence. The Neo-Black movement was born out of their determination to fight for the restoration of the culture, dignity and pride of the blackman. Their establishment was response to the Sharpeville and serve to massacres in South Africa. Its newspaper was called Black Axe (so named euphemistically as the Axe with which "Cut" the white man and those keeping the Blackman in bondage). This name, Black Axe, later became the synonym for the movement. The Vikings and the Mafia were created by government during the regime of General Sani Abacha. The Daughter of Jezebel and the Black Brazier were both female responses to all pervasive male chauvinism and domination on campus combined with the coincidental interest of the girl friends of the members. The Pirates confraternity succeeded in remaining the fraternity without imbibing or internalizing the culture of violence in shedding the image of cultism. The Buccaneers slipped into violence at some point and became deeper in intra fraternity violence. However, before the bubble burst and perhaps taking a cue from the Pirates fraternity they took steps to restructure and re-organize in a way that rid their organization of violence. Significantly, the Buccaneers have not been involved in any of the campus violence in recent times. Much of the violence we have witnessed are tracked to the Eiyeye confraternity, the black Axe, the Vikings and the Mafites as they are called. indeed, many lives had been lost in cults clashes and killing in higher institutions, not less than 150 students and others who have died as a results of intra-fraternity rivalry in the last ten years (Oguntease, 1999). The number of killings keeps increasing as government and other stake holders are yet to come up with measures to check their activities in campus.

Today in Nigeria, there is hardly any tertiary institution which has not suffered the adverse effects of the activities of secret cult which have been characterized by violence. Adevanju (2005) reported that between 1996 and 1999 more than three hundred and fifty Nigerian students were killed as a result of power struggle among the secret cult group in tertiary institutions while others were either seriously wounded or maimed in cult related violence. This killings calls

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for a study on cultism, seeking for solution to either reduce or avoid killing totally. Onuogha (1996) asserts that “modus operandi” of each of these cult groups differ among themselves, but all operate in secrets.

Reasons why Students engage in Cultism

Most of the students who join secret cults are adolescents of age bracket (15 – 23 years) and they do so as a result of personal volition or out of intimidation (Onodarho, 2010). Such of the unwilling recruits may have join cultism due to the influence of their friends who they want to show that they are not men. Some of the strategies cultist use to lure and recruit new members are cajoling, set up, talent hunting and intimidation (Oraekwe, 2000).

According to Oyemwimina and Aibiye, (2015), there are so many reasons which compel student to join a cult. Basically, the following are some of the reasons.

Crave for Supremacy

To be seen as a lord or tough guy, because to them toughness ensures a lot of benefits, free access to any female student of one’s choice, free entry and exist in parties; free access to other students belonging such as pail, electric iron, radio, money, cheating in examinations, intimidating lecturers into passing them (Onuogha, 1998).

Search for Responsibility

Some students join cults in order to perform certain service for the members. For example some students may engage in cultism in order to fight for perceived injustice against members in their campus.

Protection

The most common antic employed in luring ignorant student is the protection fable. They make an ignorant student believe that they can give their victim absolute protection being the most powerful and strongest cult that nobody or cult group can cross their path without paying dearly for it. In order to seek power for protection from attack from rival cults, and intimidation from fellow students, some students join the secret cults. Some students are made to believe that as members of secret cults, they are certainly free to command respect from fellow students. They see it as a way of intimidation from fellow students. Some students join the secret cults. Some students are made to believe that as members of secret cults, they are certainly free to command respect from fellow students. They see it as a way of getting rid of their timidity.

Inferiority Complex

Students who join cult groups for this reason make mistakes due to their perception that the cult organization is a place where they can find people who will readily accept them without regard to their social status. And not knowing that segregation exists in cult organization. Some students join cultists as a result of inferiority Complex. This is very common among students from disorderly homes and poor families. They believe that becoming a cultist would forestall those who they assume to be superior to them from looking down on them.

Economic Gain

According to Oyegoke (2003) cult members are given the wrong impression that they stand a better chance of becoming economically more buoyant than non-members. Students from poor homes are easily won over with this gimmick. They are told that for them to live well and have access to so many avenue of making money on campus, the only way is to join a cult organization. They make their victims believe that they can be independent of their poor parents' assistance. So many students from poor home fall victim of this. There is no normal and legitimate means of making money in the cult world. The only means cultists employ in getting money is by forceful extortion of money from their fellow students, some are involved in stealing and armed robbery.

Frustration

A lot of students join cult groups out of financial, academic, social and psychological frustration. These students usually resort to drug taken as a way out after which he becomes a cultist trooping for a miraculous solution.

The Love for Female Students

There are students who join cult groups because they think female students will like to go out with them. And can use their status as cultist to force any girl on campus to go out with them.

Peer Group Influence

Most students joined various cult groups due to peer group influence and pressure. Students who became cultist due to this factor have done so, based on the assumption that they don't want to be seen as weaklings and mere men by their friends who are cultists. This group of students fails to realize that a popular decision taken by a bandwagon is not always right. So many youths have placed

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their destinies at the mercy of their peer groups due to their negative decision (Ufuoma, 2007). Actually, no doubt that peer group's influence is a strong force that compels young students to join secret cults. The period of adolescence is marked by intense social relationship in any environment he or she finds himself. At adolescent, there is a shift of emphasis on social relationship from parents to peer group (Ibeh, 2005).

Revenge Bid

Many students join cult groups to carry out vengeance, because of their unforgiving spirit, have taken the destructive decision of joining cults. This is as a result of either somebody who is higher in authority or status that has offended them or member of their family. They think being cultists would make their goals achievable.

However, Oraekwe (2000) opines that youthful exuberance, peer group influences and pressures are the main factors that make students join campus cults. He stated that the students are generally lured into cults by the illusive gains and attractions presented to them by members of the cults. These attractions according to Oraekwe (2000) include:

1. Protection from academic failure: members are promised assistance by other member during examinations and in doing assignments and quizzes.
2. Lecturers who are members or patrons are also said to be available to assist the student "members to pass their examinations, even to the extent of influencing other lecturers to pass those members that fail their subjects.
- 3 Provision of Job: Graduate cult members are said to be greatly favored if they happen to seek employment in establishments where their members are at the helm of affairs.
4. Disposition to getting a girl of their choice easily: cult members use all forms of threat and intimidation to woo any girl of their choice.
5. Facilitating winning students (union) elections: Cult members always vigorously support their members who contest election into student union government association and clubs.
6. Conferment of tough or big guy image: Membership of campus cult gives a student an image of one who has command, authority dominion and power of manipulate on at his disposal. This makes other students to fear and envy him. Cult members feel that they belong and that they make things happen, and that they are the talk of the campus. They regard themselves as the happening guys or the 'ima kwa ndi anyi bu'? Cults hold this attraction for the new entrants.

7. Students who join cult groups for this reason make mistakes due to their perception that the cult organization is a place where they can find people who will readily accept them without regard to their social status. And not knowing that segregation exists in cult organization. Some students join cultist as a result of inferiority Complex. This is very common among students from disorderly homes and poor families. They believe that becoming a cultist would forestall those who they assume to be superior to them from looking down on them.

Reasons for sudden Increase in Cultism in Nigeria (1990-2013)

According to Atuoma and Nwosu (2015), the reasons why there is still increase in cultism in Nigeria are enumerated as follows

Societal Frustration: Bad governance among the ruling class has brought untold hardships and frustration to both parents and students (only a relative population is excluded)

Deprivation, Hopelessness and Injustices: Some of the government policies both by the military and civilian favors only elites or few in the society that masses or greater population languish in deprivation and emotional torture which sometimes the only opportunity available to this class is to enter secret cult and express their situation.

Poor attitude of lecturers to work is another problem: some lecturers avoid lectures and travel out of the country only to appear two weeks to examination and threaten the student with examination questions they didn't teach.

Lack of infrastructural resources: Inadequate Infrastructural Resources which brought about overcrowding in the classrooms, a class of 40 seats now contained 200 students. Furthermore, hotels and libraries and host of others are also inadequate for the students.

Military administrators influence: Long Military governance also gave rise to extreme moral decadence in the society: Honor and integrity are no longer virtues to be respected.

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Admission of unqualified students: Unqualified students who got admitted through bribery and corruption and which to go through threat and intimidation to both lecturers and fellow students.

Unemployment of youths: Unemployment in Nigeria society is another serious reason for interest in cult activities.

Hereditary factor: some students take after their parents and in campus it is a normal life to be a member of secret cult. And of cause, sometimes leaders boast of cultism to survive in leadership and younger ones thinks it is right to belong.

Nigeria police force attitude to cultism: In some instance, culprits of cult activities go free in the hands of police. This encourages others to join too. .

The Effects of Cultism in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

Many students became cultist without knowing the inherent dangers associated with cultism. According Atuoma and Nwosu (2015), some of the negative effects of being a cult member include:

Life of Insecurity: A lot of lives and properties have been destroyed in the course of clashes between different cult sects without occurring to them that they could be victims of the cult war. In the cult world the strongest, the bravest, the weaklings and the most careful one have been killed. The most unfortunate thing is that those who were not party to what led to these clashes are mostly the victims. Majority of the cultists ignorantly walked into the hands of their assailants without the prior knowledge of a clash between their cult and a rival cult, thus, a cultist lives a life of insecurity (Obamwonyi, 2004). He is never sure if the next momentous clashes can erupt any moment, time and place.

Threat to Family: Cult clashes have actually gone beyond the perimeter fence of the Campuses to rival cult members home. A lot of the cult family members have been killed at their home for the escape of the son by their own cult group in course of leadership tussle and rival cut group in the case of clash (Obadere, 2000).

Mortgage of Liberty: The oath taken during the initiation implies that you have sold your liberty, freedom and everything about yourself to the cult

organization. The allegiance to the cult authority is total. This means a cultist doesn't have control over his or her life and to a reasonable extent the cult authority dictate or determine activities of their member. Any one fall short of their rules and regulations pay dearly for it.

Disrupted Academic Programme: The academic calendar of the tertiary institution in Nigeria is always disrupted as a result of the affected Campus peace whenever there is cult invasion. The violent activities of the cultist on campus have affected the educational development in the country. In most times the academic activities in the institutions are brought to a standstill as a result of the activities of these nocturnal groups (Udoh and Nwosu, 2015).

Threat to Cultist Academic: According to Ufuoma (2002), every cultist stands the risk of being rusticated or expelled from school, so many cultists in the past have either been rusticated or expelled from various higher institutions across the country due to their involvement in cult activities. For so many, such expulsion and rustication occurred towards the end of the successful completion of their academics. In most times the cultist suffer for the offence committed by other cultists from the sister school of who have nothing at stake in the institution. Cultists are also prone to longer years on Campus. They always occupied themselves with nocturnal activities at the detriment of the academic which result in the basket of carry-overs usually prolong their stay on campus. Also cults abandon their examinations for the fear of being attacked by members of rival cults or picked up by law enforcement Thereby end up with automatic spill-over (final year) and beg of carry-overs. Almost all the cult clashes recorded occur during examination periods.

The Threat of Law Enforcement Agents: Cultists are living in perpetual fear of being arrested during and after cult clashes. A lot of cultist have abandon the education for their fear of being arrested after been named against cult operation. Those caught by the police languishes in cells in the police stations.

The Effects of Cultism on Students

Oraekwe (2000) enumerates the effects of cultism on students thus:

1. Cult's membership makes one lose credibility in the society. Unfavorable comments and uncompliment remarks are usually made whenever a cultists name is mentioned.

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2. A student cult who indulges in charm or occultic dealings in order to foster cult nefarious activities is bound to ruin his life. He may either run mad or die for failure to strictly keep to the dictates on the observances of the charm's occultic rules.v
3. Cultists bring disruption to their families. They can cause their parents or close relations to develop high blood pressure (hypertension) which may lead to untimely death.
4. A large increase in violent crimes against people ranging from armed robbery, prostitution, dropout , murdering night wandering, possession of firearms, drug abuse, rape, threats and other inhuman practices.
5. A cultist could be convicted for any offence he commits as a cultist, and his profile as ex-convict will make it almost impossible for him to get any meaningful employment or appointment in the future.

Effect of Cultism to National Development

Atuoma and Nwosu (2015) enumerated the effects of cultism to national development thus:

(a) Human Capital Development: cult activities have taken many lives and properties especially the youths. Also in most cases secret societies on campuses are made up of group of students between the age of 20-35 years. Such loses affect economic and social development of the country. It conforms to Adeyanju (2000) who reported that between 1996 and 1999 more than three hundred and fifty Nigerian students were killed as a result of power struggle among the secret cult groups in tertiary institutions while other were either seriously wounded or maimed in cult related violence.

(b) The sanity of human life: when human beings are butchered as animal in the name of practicing cultism. It calls for a rethink in schools. It is debasing that cult members priding on the number of heads killed by some of them. It questions the integrity of man and so it is a great loss to national development.

(c) Moral decadence: cultism is associated with rape, extortion, maiming, stealing, arose, exam malpractice all are against the moral principles of higher institution. Adie (1997), asserted that cultist are the kind of students who disrupt university examination, carry guns or acid to examination halls and threaten lecturers in order to obtain good grades. This singular act questions the integrity of Nigeria education system and certificates in the international community.

(d) Cultism affects the Nigeria legislation/laws: it reduces the standard of laws made in Nigerian National Assembly or Decree made by the military. A typical example is the decree 47 of 1989 that pronounced a number of jail

term for any cultist found guilty (Onuogha, 1996). Olusegun Obasanjo in 2000 issued a three month ultimatum to all vice chancellors to eradicate cultism from campuses. It, therefore, questions the integrity and workability of legislations made by Nigerian legislators and administrators.

(e) Cult activities yield no returns on the huge investment made by parents and society in these students. Instead, they lower productivity, slow down national development and breed a culture of violence, fear and insecurity.

(f) Negative influence on Nigeria education system: cultism has so affected our educational system by disrupting academic calendars through the clashes and forcing the university to be closed against the university programmes. The creditability of education system is now being questioned.

Menace of Cult activities in universities and society

The menace and aggressiveness of cult members and cult related activities is the most embarrassing problem facing tertiary institutions as this has resulted to escalated crime wave in the various institutions of learning today. According to Okwu (2006) as at September 2003, 5,000 students and lecturers have died on Nigerian Campus as a result of cult related violent clashes. On 8th June 2006, some cult members invaded University of Ado-Ekiti at 12 noon where they burnt the cadet's office, killed three students and wounded many students and staff of the University (Omoegun and Akanle, 2007). Ogidefa (2008) reported that Tony Ileogbuna, Acting Head of Geology Department at the Enugu State University of Science and Technology was murdered. Yomi Edeki of University of Benin was killed on February 4th; Tuesday, March 9, 2004 Vincent Uloho of University of Benin City was also murdered in cold blood. The Secretary General of the Student Union of University of Benin (W. Obong) was killed by cult members during a parliamentary setting in 1997. Jekayinfa (2008) enumerated some of the menace of the secret cults in the Nigeria institutions of higher learning thus:

i, The Principal Assistant Registrar of Delta State University – Peter Obodo was murdered in cold blood by cultists over issue bordering on school administration.

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

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

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

v, At the University of Ibadan, the Chief Security Officer was brutally beaten by cult members in the presence of his wife.

Measures to Control Cultism in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

Cultism is a major social vice bedeviling our institutions of higher learning and our society today. It is an uphill task to completely eradicate cultism in the society. However, steps can be taken to drastically reduce the negative effects of secret cults in our tertiary institutions and the society in general. The eradication of secret cults demands the involvement of the government, schools, parents and religious institutions and every element of social structure in society. That the strategy of control must focus on the home, school, religious institutions, government and the society.

Home

The battle for the eradication starts from the home and parents should ensure the under listed responsibilities.

(a) Parents should desist from being members of secret cults and also discourage their children from being members.

(b) Show good examples and instill moral discipline and fear of God to their wards.

(c) Parents should indulge in counselling, follow-up of their academic/social lives, associate and partner with the school for the correct of any negative trait in the children.

(d) The parents must work closely with the institutions authority to arrive at a lasting solution . (Rischler, 2002; Opuuwah 2000).

School

(a) Admission must be based on academic and moral merits, while a proper administrative system should be put in place to address the academic, social and welfare need of students.

(b) A comprehensive orientation must be organized for all the new students expressing the various recruitment strategies and negative effects of the cultism on campus.

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- (c) The school authority should try as much as possible to enforce law and order in the school and provide basic amenities that would take care of the students welfare and make the environment conducive for studying.
- (d) The lecturers should act as model for their students to emulate. They should start on time to teach them moral and values of the society.
- (e) Any academic or non-academic staff found to be cultic should appropriately be disciplined.
- (f) Regular impromptu search of suspected cultist room must be embarked on.
- (g) The Security Department must be empowered for the proper policing of the campus (properly trained, equipped and funded). .

Government

- (a) Politicians and others in government circle should learn to curtail their urge for material acquisition, put the interest of Nigeria above their selfish interest and provide leadership by example.
- (b) Government should avoid symbolic policies and formulate workable policies aimed at reducing unemployment, corruption, poverty, illiteracy, etc.
- (c) Government and school authorities should avoid using cult groups in pursuing their selfish interest. The decree 47 of 1989 should be strictly enforced.
- (d) Government, non-governmental agencies and the media should set up their campaigns against Secret cults and its destructive tendencies. .
- (e) Government and school authority should provide effective Anti-cult groups
- (f) Guidance and counselor should be posted to every tertiary institution in Nigeria with the duty of counseling the students and staff only. These counselors should be charged to report systematically cases of unexplained and unjustified advances of students to female or male lectures, and that of lecturers to students.
- (g) Government should know that nobody is above the law and whoever that is guilty of cultism whether he or she is from rich or poor family should be made to face the music accordingly. This will serve as detriment to those who have joined or to those who have the intention of joining the secret cults.
- (g) Government should reduce the high cost of education in Nigeria so that everyone can afford it.

Religious Organizations

- (a) Religious organization and social institutions still remain a force to reckon with in the crusade against crime.

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(b) Aggressive evangelism of waging war against cultism in all tertiary institutions should be allowed by all religious groups in the country.

(c) Moral messages should be preached while the cleric lives reflecting fully the messages and stop celebrating wealth as this will reduce crime generally in the society.

Society

Society encompasses the home, the school, religious organizations, business organization and government. Children are raised up in the homes, trained or brought up in the schools and finally ending in larger society. The expected societal roles in the reduction of cultism in tertiary institution generally include.

(a) Dignity and respect should be accorded to industrious, honesty and good conduct persons rather than to worshipping money. Religious organization should desist from honouring fraudsters simply because they are wealthy.

(b) Leaders must imbibe the fear of God and put to an end in ordinate acquisition of materials wealth to the detriment of the down trodden.

(c) The communities where tertiary institutions are situated should assist such institution by providing genuine information about individuals and groups whose activities are questionable. Landlords should be advised to properly screen students or other tenants who come to live in area of high student concentration. All such reports should be copied to school authorities or law enforcement agencies.

Students

(a) Students should be encouraged to imbibe the fear of God and be of good morals

(b) Students should be encouraged to resist any form of coalition from the cult members and report to the school's security department or a nearby police station as earlier advised.

(c) Whenever a student is having any misunderstanding with cultists as a result of other issues besides advances at them to join a cult department, it is not advisable to seek for the assistance of other cultists to settle your misunderstanding. They can use it as an opportunity to exploit you financially. Non-cults should avoid close relationship with cultists.

Conclusion

The study discovered that cultism which is a system of extreme religious beliefs and practices involving a small group of students of tertiary institutions who mostly indulge in secret and dangerous activities that posited a serious threat to

our educational system is real and urgent solution to this social menace is needed. To curb cultism to the barest minimum collaborative effort of parents, school, government and various religious groups are needed so as to improve teaching and learning environment. The parents must work closely with the institutions authority to arrive at a lasting solution [19] and [20]. More importantly, counseling services in tertiary institution should be taken seriously and counselors have a major role to play towards helping to implement the program for the reduction of the incidence of cultism in tertiary institutions. It was also found that corruption in the society, broken homes, inborn trait of being sadist, not persecuting those who are caught in cultist activities and influence from parents who belong to secret cults were among the causes of cultism in tertiary institution. The effects of cultism on the students include increase in crimes like armed robbery, prostitution and others, spread of diseases, decline in academic performance of cultist, increase in examination malpractice, destruction of lives and properties, drug abuse, arrest, detention and imprisonment. To curb cultism in tertiary institutions, the university or college authority should organize workshops during orientation of new students to enlighten them on the dangers of cultism, every institution should have department of guidance and counseling in order to guide and counsel the students. Also necessary support and encouragement should be provided to this department in terms of finance and materials. Students should be discouraged from joining cult groups and their attention channeled to concentrate on their studies. This undoubtedly will lead to good grades that can launch them into the world of work.

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