

MANAGEMENT OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS: COUNSELLING AS STRATEGY FOR NATIONAL HEALING

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ABSTRACT

The paper examined the management of Internally Displaced Person counseling as a strategy for national healing.

The paper discussed funding, planning, and coordination as effective ways of managing Internally Displaced Persons. The paper argued counseling can lead to positive change in behavior. Positive change in behavior can lead to individual rehabilitation and social adjustment. The paper concluded that counseling services are a means of equipping the individual IDP to a choice of career for onward national healing.

Keywords: Management, Counselling, and National Healing.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Violence perpetrated by the militants, kidnappers, armed groups, herdsmen, and Boko Haram continued to cause conflict in 2017, leading to 279,000 new displacements, bringing the total number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) at the end of 2017 to 1,707,000. Floods in urban centers were also responsible for the bulk of disaster-induced crisis, causing a total of 122,000 new displacements. According to the report, there are 3.3 million IDPs in Nigeria and 470,500 individuals were displaced in 2013 alone. On a global scale, Nigeria is only ranked behind Syria with 6.5 million IDPs and Colombia with 5.7 million IDPs. The report explains the unprecedented rise in IDPs in Nigeria last year by the increased number of Boko Haram attacks, heavy-handed counter-insurgency operations, and herdsmen attack.

The most widely used definition is the one containing the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. The UN defines internally displaced persons are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border. In the context of this paper, IDPs refers to individual or group of persons that flee their residence as a result of conflict, attack or natural disaster to a safe place. The number of internally displaced people is on the increase as a result of the Boko Haram insurgency, particularly, in North-eastern Nigeria. The assessment indicates that 13.33 percent were displaced due to communal clashes, 0.99 percent by natural disasters, and 85.68 percent as a result of insurgency attacks by Islamists, and there are 2,241, 484 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nigeria (International Organisation for Migration, 2016). The increasing rise in conflict, natural disasters, and attacks has led to population explosion in IDP camps in Nigeria in

recent times. This increased in IDP camps calls for effective management of both human and material resources among the IDPs in various camps in Nigeria.

Management of IDPs has remained a tough issue for various administrations in Nigeria. The rehabilitation and resettlement of IDPs in Nigeria as well as provision of adequate security for IDPs have posed a bid challenge despite claimed efforts of national international and the authorities concerned in Nigeria.

There are many strategies the individual and the government can use to avert insecurity and to achieve safety. One of the strategies is the management of security in Nigeria. Emenike (2003) defined management as a process designed to ensure cooperation, participation, intervention, and involvement in the effective achievement of goals. Ochai (2013) defines management as the coordination of human and material resources in an organization in order to achieve goals. In the context of this paper, management is defined as the process of planning, controlling, organizing, directing, coordinating, and supervising human and material resources in order to attain stability, harmony, and peace. Insecurity is influenced by geographic, economic, and social factors. Management is an effective's tool to avert disparities in resource allocation that could lead to insecurity.

Government can plan for the future of the nation. Ochai (2013) argued that government can plan for the stability of the individuals and the entire nation. The national planning and Research Department in Nigeria can prepare a variety of plans to access and address challenges in areas ranging from housing and economic development, land use, transportation, and food storage. National Research Study (2016) reported that a comprehensive plan is a leading policy tool with a legal significance. Effective planning can address insecurity and other security systems issues as important plan components.

2.0 FUNDING OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

One of the major problems now facing IDPs in Nigeria is the problem of under-funding. This is not surprising considering the fact that in recent times, government revenues have reduced sharply, while the national economy itself is in total chaos. The government, which statutorily bears the costs of caring for IDPs in the country, now faces tight budget constraints due to the collapse of the oil market, economic meltdown, and the need to meet heavy and rising debt service obligations

Underfunding of IDPs is under-funding of the various IDPs camps could be traced to changes in the country's economic fortunes. Following the oil boom of the mid-1970s, the Nigerian economy was soon to experience depression (especially in the 1980s), as the economy witnessed a slow growth in output, while income per capita declined. Worse still, the country faces unprecedented population explosion, while both oil and non-oil export receipts declined, with rising import bills. The once oil-rich Nigeria, became a poor nation as she suffered deficits in the balance of payments, and lost international creditworthiness. To revamp the economy, Nigeria started implementing the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1986, which is part of the conditions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank, for improving the country's creditworthiness. Adequate funding of IDPs in the provision of health facilities, social amenities, food, and shelter could improve the living standard of the people.

3.0 PLANNING FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

Planning is the basic function of management. It deals with chalking out a future course of action and deciding in advance the most appropriate course of action for the achievement of pre-determined goals. According to Koontz in Ochai (2012), Planning is deciding in advance what to do, when to do and how to do it. It bridges the gap between where people are and where people want to be. A plan is a future course of action. It is an exercise in problem-solving and decision-making. Therefore planning takes into consideration available and prospective human and physical resources of the school organization to get effective coordination, contribution, and perfect adjustment. Ochai (2012) argued that Planning involves described as the process of deciding in advance, the method and procedures which an individual group or organization intends to follow in order to accomplish its outlined objectives. It is the business of identifying goals and objectives and working out ways and means of achieving them in order to arrive at desired qualitative and quantitative goals through the application of planning skills.

Panning is an essential component of achieving success. According to Oboegbulem (2008), planning skill involves the skill of making critical choices and decisions; obtaining and analyzing statistics, and using them to make projections of future development, particularly, estimates of human, physical and financial resources needed to achieve poverty alleviation and sustainability. In planning, decisions must be taken regarding who is to perform an action, where it is to be performed, and how it is to be performed. This is also the consideration of how much it will cost to perform the job as well as the materials to be used.

Planning skills will help the government identify or diagnose the present state of things in the IDPs camps. This will enable the government takes a decision in terms of whether the IDPs camp is deficient of which will necessitate what action to take to remedy the situation. While the government takes a decision, issues are noted and obstacles that may prevent the attainment of the goal and proper maintenance of camps could be identified. Planning skills will enrich the capability of camp coordinators in effective and efficient administration that will enhance the productivity of the IDPs in various camps. When productivity is high, stress and trauma will be reduced. Therefore in the planning process government emphasis could be placed on the enhancement and rehabilitation of IDPs.

4.0 COORDINATION OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

The camp coordinator, the government, and citizens work together to achieve goals and objectives. This requires a deep collective determination and coordination to reach an identical objective by sharing knowledge, learning, and building consensus. This important stage consists of inter-relating the various parts of the work. It involves coordinating the various job roles and responsibilities of IDPs and other staff, within the camp with the broader community. Coordination is an orderly arrangement of efforts to provide unity of action in the fulfillment of common objects in the organization for the achievement of a particular purpose. It is the willingness of individuals to help each other. Co-ordination is an effort to integrate effectively energies of different groups such as government and stakeholders and others to achieve the general objectives of IDPs. Co-ordination is the unification, integration, synchronization of the efforts of group members to provide unity of

action in the pursuit of common goals. It is a hidden force that binds all the other functions of management. According to Mooney and Reelay (1996), coordination is an orderly arrangement of group efforts to provide unity of action in the pursuit of common goals. Charles (2005) opines that coordination is the integration of several parts into an orderly whole to achieve the purpose of understanding. Because of the size of the IDPs, the increasing demands for public accountability, the government regulations and policies, the increasing demand among IDPs, and the changes in technology, it is essential that the coordinating role be given top priority in IDPs camps and in other settlement.

5.0 COUNSELING SERVICES FOR NATIONAL HEALING

Guidance and counseling is fundamental to students and the individuals in society. Mogbo, Obumneke, and Anyachebelu (2011) define guidance and counseling as a process of helping individuals to understand themselves and their world. In the context of this study guidance is an important component of educational service. The counselor renders the following services towards achieving national healing in Nigeria.

Career Counseling: It is the developmental process through which the individual develop their capacity. Students occupy a prominent place in any society especially the youth. The National Youth Development Policy (2001) asserts that the youths are the foundation of society. Their energies and orientation define the pattern of development and security of a nation. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2010), young people aged between 15 and 24 years and 25 – 44 years account for 94 percent of the total unemployment person in Nigeria. Muscari in Ilu (2013) revealed that about 1.5 million Nigerian youths enter the labor market every year without any hope of getting employment for life assurance. The counselor has the role of bringing to the IDPs an increased understanding of the vocational and social information to make a wise choice career that could lead to self-employment and self-reliance.

Information Counselling: The highest geographical mobility of youth and students in Nigeria is in form of rural to urban which has affected peace and stability of the rural and urban alike. According to Ilu (2013), analysts have argued that in Nigeria generally, the skills that job seekers possess do not match the needs and demands of employer. Prospective school graduates need a lot of information on issues such as, societal demand, safety and freedom. The school counsellor is required to guide and make available necessary information that could help the individual students to actualize their academic dream and contribute to the development of the nation in all aspects. School counselors are in a better position to provide students the appropriate timely information needed to help students to set ambitious goals and to realize their goals in line with the demand of the nation. The role of the counselor will be to assist the school in planning; organizing and mapping out strategies for effective implementation of activities and programs in schools that could lead to security management in Nigeria.

6.0 TRAINING FOR EMPOWERMENT

The government promotes national cohesion and integration by ensuring political, social, and economic stability. It is the responsibility of the government to create a stable and predictable environment for citizens to pursue their life-long aspirations and endeavors. The Government

has used different strategies to promote national cohesion and integration. One of the strategies adopted by the Ministry of Justice, National Cohesion, and Constitutional Affairs is education and training which provide a strong platform for social transformation. This training could help to consolidate efforts towards promoting cohesion and integration. The training could be developed to enable everyone involved in national cohesion and integration to execute the mandate of training the Nigerian citizenry on matters pertaining to national integration. The training provides the structure and ensures uniformity of objectives.

7.0 CONCLUSION

Considering the importance of counseling in achieving national healing the paper argued that IDPs need to be properly cared for in their various camps and settlement. Counselling provides the much-desired return in rehabilitating IDPs, resettlement, and development. Counseling services are a means of equipping the individual IDPs to a choice of career and life after IDPs camp. Emphasis must be placed on management as a tool for quality human and material control which will propel national healing in Nigeria.

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