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TOPIC: CULTISM IN NIGERIA

Cultism is a system or practice of a cult. Cult on the other hand is a group of people with a religious philosophical or cultural identity sometimes viewed as a sect, often existing on the margins of society or exploitative towards its members.

Cultism Popularly called in the neighbourhood as Secret Cult can be said to be an organisation of which people come together to pledge their allegiances under an oath and have a social bond of commitment and dedication for the good of the organization This set of people carry out their meetings when people are not aware of, especially during the odd hours (Midnight) and far away from residence (in the bush most often time). These individuals keep their activities secret from non-members and people in the society.

HISTORY OF CULTISM IN NIGERIA: The history of cultism can be traced back to 1952 when the Nobel Laurel Price Winner, Professor Oluwole Akinwande Soyinka and six others formed the ‘Pyrate Confraternity’ (sea Dogs). At that time various school of thought are developed, surrounding the actual aim and objective of founding the cult group. The pioneer and its members said it is a platform for the fight of human right and justice (activism) and it is void of evil.

After some years, various other cult groups emerged such as Black Axe, Jezebel Daughters, Black Eye, Black Beret, Black Bra, Supreme Eiye, Vikings, Aro Mates, Buccaneers amongst others whose activities suggest nothing but evil in the society. These cults groups share some features in common which are initiation of new members, ritual practices, oaths taking, inscription of marks on their bodies, use of sign, symbols and colours. Their activities involves frequent violent clash among different cults groups which always lead to death or end in casualties, constant abuse of drugs, armed robbery, sexual assault, vandalization, forceful intimidation of lecturers, examination malpractices, harassment and bullying of fellow course mate, assassination to mention a few. This social vice is really eating up the moral and educational standard of the country. As a matter of fact, innocent students are being lured into the act and all other social vices.

**Causes Of Cultism In Our Present Day Society**

Cultism in Nigeria is caused by different factors and the most common causes are:

**Quest For Power and Social Identity:** The major causes of cultism is the quest for power and social identity among their colleagues in school. Many students become members of the cults because of their quest for power and authority, this is mostly common among those with the aim of fighting of fighting for their rights and other people’s rights. Whereas, some others join cultism because they want to belong to a class or lifestyles higher to their peers.

**Poor Parental Training:** The present day parenthood suffers a bridge of communication and intimacy with their wards(children) and this has lead a lot of students to cultism because most parent fail to inculcate norm, moral, value and discipline to their wards. There is a deviation in the parenthood of this present dispensation, the pursuit of career or money had led a lot of children astray.

**Peer Pressure/ peer group Influence:** Pressure from peers group can make even a decent person do some awful things at times, that is why peer pressure is another major cause of cultism. Through the process of interaction, influence is bound to happen which can either be positive or negative. And those that are lured into it end up accepting it because of fear of being killed.

**Search for Protection:** many people join cultism in search of protection from harm or any form of harassment or intimidation. The sense of security offered to the members gives them boldness and confidence against any threats in any form.

**The Effect Of Cultism In Nigeria:** These effects includes: **Death**, **High Increase In Student Dropout**, **Thuggery, Loss of properties, low self-esteem and so on.**

**Suggested Solution To Cultism In Nigeria**

Cultism if not tackled, will continue to eat down into every of the society with more effects on individuals, families, schools, religious setting and the society at large. The following are the suggested solution to cultism in the country.

1: **Public Enlightenment Against Cultism**: If government, schools, religious gathering, parents and non-governmental organization can organise workshops, lectures, talks, seminars and campaigns on the dangers associated with cultism all over schools without leaving out the primary schools, i think it will help in curbing this social menace faced by everyone in the society

**2. Discipline:** There is this popular saying that goes thus “charity begins at home” if parent should enforce discipline in their wards or inculcate the necessary morals and values in their children i think if this menace is not curb totally, it will be reduced to a controllable manner. Also, school authorities should have high standard discipline with stringent punishments for cultist caught in the school premises or outside the four walls of the school.

**3. Government Standard:** If the government can put into law the punishment due for anybody grasp with anything that has to do with cultism or racism, I’m sure it will go a long way in curbing this social vices. However, the political leaders supporting them should also be punished by the law.

With all the solutions listed above, if well adhered to will surely eradicate cultism to a manageable level instead of the continuous escalation of cultism we are hearing all over our community.