

AKINOLA OLUWAKEMISOLA SHARON.

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TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AMONG YOUTHS.

Anti-social behaviour is a very serious issue not only in Nigeria but in the entire world. The problem of anti-social behaviour is rapidly increasing due to the lockdown placed on schools, the inability of students to focus their attention on their education because of social media and peer pressure. A lot of deviant behaviours are gradually raising, ranging from a mere nuisance to a high level of violent criminal behaviour, examples of such behaviours are bullying in school, aggressiveness towards law enforcement agents, drug addiction, examination malpractice, cultism, fraud, terrorism, cybercrime, harassment of different kinds, including sexual assault and abuse. Policy makers and strategists have discovered over time that these behaviours could have a massive negative impact on the lives of individuals and the society at large. This dilemma may not seem important when compared to other problems in the society, but have the effect of costing people their livelihood/income, personal safety and as far as damaging the reputation of a country.

For a full understanding of this write-up, a definition of the key terms is important.

WHAT IS ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR?

It is a dysfunction of a person's way of thinking, perceiving situations and relating to others. People understand anti-social behaviour differently based on a series of factors including time, context, location, community tolerance and quality of life expectations.

In Lagos, the level of youth crime is high with many young people in police custody. Many children and young adults between the ages of 10 to 24 years engage in anti-social behaviour which most people find offensive, scary and

alarming. A clear example of such anti-social behaviour was exhibited recently by the reign of a group called 'one million boys' or 'Awon omo no salary' who were causing havoc and chaos in Lagos and some parts of Ogun state. They engaged in daylight robbery, burning of houses, misuse of firework, breaking of bottles along roads and also the killings of those who failed to comply with their instructions. This group, made a lot of people feel unsafe and scared for their lives.

Over the years, the psychologists and social commentators have been able to narrow down the causes of such behaviours. Some people believe that antisocial behaviours found in criminals are caused by abnormal condition by biological and environmental factors. It can also stem from a variety of factors such as;

- Poor education
- Ill health
- Poverty and child development
- Income and material deprivation
- Family problems as a result of neglect from parents and the society

Further still, these behaviours might also be attributed to religion and culture. Exposure to some religious teachings could lead a youth to antisocial behaviour such as terrorism.

METHODS OF TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

These problems could be curtailed by a number of ways. According to Adam Parkzer, there are four basic ways of solving deviant behaviours, which are; deterrence, retribution, incapacitation, and rehabilitation.

Deterrence, or more commonly known as punishment, is providing a negative consequence to a particular anti-social action. Members of society who support deterrence believe that people will not commit a crime if the punishment is too great, so long the benefit of committing the crime is less than the severity of the punishment, people will opt to take the better route; which is to not commit such crimes. This method of tackling these problems may not be easy to enforce in the society as people who are emotionally sensitive to punishment may not abide to these laws.

Retribution, which is popularly known as 'an eye for an eye' concept. It is the idea that when someone harms someone else, the victim has the right to harm the attacker using the same method originally used. This would also make people to do to others what they would like others to do to them. Communities that support retribution believe that all people are equal, and when one person commits a crime, the society should be able to get even with the criminal.

Incapacitation is the best known in modern society as placing people in jail or prison. This idea behind this method of reacting to crime is to prevent the criminal from committing more crimes. Societies that believe in this method believe that criminals are outliers in their community, and as a result, should be designated in a physical manner by separating their existence from the rest of the people. Many people do not change their way of life; once they are reintroduced into the society, they return to their old ways, and for many criminals, society's method of crime control ends up not accomplishing anything.

Rehabilitation has been increasingly supported recently and can be broken down as a moral and ethical school for criminals. When people commit crimes, they enter a program where their goal is to understand why they behaved in such a manner. Societies where rehabilitation is done view criminals as human beings who can become better people. The main goal is to change criminals such that when they re-enter the community from which they came, they live a life that follows all the society's norms and laws, and no longer engage in deviant behaviour. Individuals who are determined to remain criminals will not benefit from this program, as an internal motivation and desire to change one's self is very important during rehabilitation.

In conclusion, government and parents should work hand in hand to discourage youths from participating in anti-social behaviour by ensuring that parents put in the necessary efforts to take care of their children in the society. Government should also provide basic social amenities such as shelter, roads, water and schools. They should also imbibe social studies and civic education in school curriculums to encourage good social behaviour.