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## Secret Cults in Nigerian Institutions of Learning from Secret Societies to Collegiate Cultism: An Appraisal

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### **Abstract:**

*There is popular saying that “there is no smoke without fire”. Thus most occurring problems in our society today be it social, economic, political, religion-cultural has a base of take off. The current menace of cultism or secret societies of various types and dimensions in Nigeria’s educational institutions today follow this trend. The failure of the authorities (state and school administrators) to curtail the operations of these secret societies in our institutions of learning is traceable in one part to the neglect of their historical linkage or base. The focus of this paper is to identify the relationship between the traditional secret societies that have transverse generations in various societies and the present campus secret societies and believe unequivocally that the present war against campus secret societies would not be won except we blend the activities of the various stakeholders in our educational system towards managing and resolving this complex and sophisticated trend.*

**Keywords:** Secret cults, Secret societies, collegiate cultism, school administration

### **1. Introduction**

Societies over the ages are replete with whispers and traces of mystical cult and secret societies. Thus, most social disorders in our society today with historical, economic, political or cultural misgiving have a base of take off. In historical records for instance, there are accounts of elders or priests who guarded the forbidden knowledge of ancient peoples and prominent men, meeting in secret to direct the course of civilization (Cooper, 2008).

So is the current menace of cultism or secret societies of varying types and dimensions in our educational institutions in Nigeria today. Traditional cultism was predominant in Nigerian society in pre-colonial period while institutional cultism came into being only about a decade before the Nigerian independence (Ogundimu et al., 2005).

The former according to Ogundimu is traditional because it thrived from clan to clan or from kingdom to kingdom and its members were noted to have played important roles in the art of governance and enforcement of discipline in various civil and quasi-military organizations of the traditional societies in the pre-colonial era. Examples of such cult groups are Ogboni/Egbe Awo/Imule in Yoruba land, Ekpe in Efik and Owegbe in Edo. Fifty years is the minimum age required for entry into Ogboni cult (Ogundimu et al quoting Daramola and Jeje, 1975:131 and 2000).

There are also evidences from the works of great philosophers that include the existence of secret societies in human history. For instance, a writings are full of information on the “Mysterious”.

Most Secret societies are partly religious in origin, but often acquire sender attributes (Idowu, 1975). In some cases, such groups control the government. For example, in China, the Boxers and other Secret Societies led the Boxer rebellion against Europeans (Silla, 1972) The Secret Societies that arose in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century have been chiefly political and benevolent. The struggle for freedom in Italy gave birth to powerful secret organizations that continue to exist after Italian Unity had been cemented which cause the authority much apprehension. Faloye, (1998) asserts that secret cult all over the World is not a recent phenomenon. He is also of the view that, in terms of cultural function and social role those secret societies have had both laudable and objectionable intents.

The familiar Ogboni cult in the ancient Yoruba Kingdom wielded both spiritual and political positive and negative powers. The Ogboni cult arrogated legislative and administrative functions to itself.

Our emphasis here is that cultism or secret societies is not a recent happening, but had been with us for long.

The oldest of such secret societies that have ever existed in the history of the world is the Brotherhood of the snake also called the Brotherhood of the Dragon. This particular secret society still exists today under many names and guises. These include:

- i. The Ancient Arabic order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine (AANONMS)
- ii. Arctic Brotherhood (AB)
- iii. American Brotherhood (AB)
- iv. Ancient Order of Satohedrins (AOS).
- v. Ancient Order of Zuzimites (AOZ).
- vi. Brotherhood of the New Life (BNL).
- vii. Benevolent Order of Monkeys (BOM)

There are many more of these secret societies listed in the complete list of fraternal Organizations.

Cultism according to Faloye,(1993) is neither a Nigerian peculiarity nor a recent resurgence. Ancient civilizations had their inventories of cultic practices notable among which were the Greek cult of Dionysus, the Concemite Baal worship. (Holy Bible)

In Black African Societies, examples of familiar cultic practices with socio-cultural intent abound. Liberia is famous for its Poro cult, Ethiopia is renowned for its Bori magic cult, the Ekpe society cult among the Efiks and the Oduzi Obodo group in Eastern Nigeria. To mention but a few with civilization entered a new order of cultism groups, some with national or universal spread like the Rosicrucian, Lodge, the Freemasons and the Reformed Ogboni Fraternity.

It is noteworthy that the chronicles of facts as expostulated by history provide us with the sense that secret societies are not new in history and that they have many things in common (Salawu, 2008).

However, religion has always played a significant role in the course of these organizations. This is, communication with a higher source, often divine, is a familiar claim in all but a few of them. In addition, the secrets of these groups are thought to be profound that only a chosen initiated are able to understand them.

Another familiar claim among secret societies is that secret societies have been generally known to be working not against the established authority but for it. In summary, in many secret societies where they must, they mirror many facets of ordinary life. One obvious thing about them is that they always exhibit exclusivity of membership. In the submission of Cooper (2008), the exclusivity of membership remains one of the secret societies most powerful weapons from which they consequently device their influence, power and authority.

In this paper, the goal is to address the issue of the evolution of secret society to collegiate secret cults which have deviated from the initial noble objectives of positive intervention in the affairs of mankind, which characterized the former. In order to achieve this goal, this paper discusses these key areas; the Concept of Collegiate Cults and Secret Societies, evolution of secret societies to collegiate cult groups, causes and the pull factors of cultism in our tertiary institutions in Nigeria, and the management/suggested way out of the problems created by the increase in cult related violence in our institutions of learning in Nigeria.

## 2. Secret Societies and Collegiate Cults – Conceptualization

The 1979 amended constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, section 35 (4) a and b bans and defines a secret society as:

“A society or association, not being a solely cultural or religious body, that uses secret signs, oaths, rites or symbols.

- (a) Whose meetings or other activities are held in secret: and
- (b) Whose members are under oath, obligation of other threat to promote the interest of its members or to aid one another under all circumstance without due regard to merit, fair play or justice, to the detriment of the legitimate expectation of those who are not members”.

Ogundimu, Opeogun and Odedeji (2005) argued that a cult is an exclusive group consisting of individual with a common attitude to life. It is a group of people with shared experience, accepted beliefs and group objectives. Moreover, it appears like a system of religious worship where members remain loyal and fully committed to the ideals, value and objectives of the group.

Secret society, according to Abdullahi (2008) is a term used to describe a variety of organization indicating a degree of secrecy and secret knowledge. According to Cooper (2008), the secrecy of and secret knowledge of these secret societies are found to be profound that only the chosen one can really understand and use them. This secrecy entails denial of membership, strong ties between members of the organization, and frequent rites or rituals which outsiders are generally not permitted to observe. In another attempt to defining the term cult, the Oxford Concise Dictionary of Sociology (1996) view it as: “a set of practices and beliefs of a group in relationship to a local god” it also give the sociological definition of cult as “small group or religious activities whose beliefs are typically secret, esoteric and individualistic”.

Ipaye (1998) defines a cult as:

“a system of religious worship, devotion, homage to a person or thing, having fancy for some particular thing or an unorthodox or false religion”.

Kolawole (1998) opined that the word cult is a concept which is devised from the Latin vocabulary, ‘cultus’ ‘culto’.

Kolawole observed that is a concept which refer to worship or religion. If this is extended further, it can be a devotion to a craze for a reason. Ogunbameru, (1997), specifically sees a secret cult as any form of organization whose activities, like those of the secret societies, are not only exclusively kept away from the knowledge of others but their activities are carried out at odd hours of the day, and they are of variant to the accepted norms and values of everyday life of the society which harbours such cult. From the discussion so far, it seems there is just a little difference between the two. Nevertheless, one can conclude that while cult is system of religious

belief and worship, secret society is an organization whose activities are kept secret, out of public knowledge or consumption, mysterious organization, which do not operate in the open (Ogunbameru, 1997).

A cult in this same sense becomes a secret society when its activities and operations are no longer conducted in the open. Secret cults therefore become collegiate when they exist or found in Schools, Colleges, Polytechnics and Universities (Oluwatilehin, 1998).

### 3. The Emergence of Campus Cults and Secret Societies in Nigeria

The introduction of cultism into Nigerian institutions of learning marked a water shed in the end of history of educational development of the country.

The origin of the existence of secret cultism in the Nigerian institution of higher education dates back to the early 50's (Ogunmola and Faloye, 2004). What is obvious is that the first campus cult (the Pirate Confraternity) was inaugurated in 1952 at the then University College, Ibadan, by the radicals of the first generation of Nigerian University Student. The main objective for this move was to checkmate the obnoxious educational policy of the then colonial administrators in the College, at that point in time. It was also meant to fight all forms of colonial mentality of the expatriate lecturers as well as foray to seek redress not only from institutional heads and administrators, but also from rival cult groups and perceived enemies, (Ogundimu, Opeogun and Odedeji, 2005). With the establishment of more universities, colleges of education, Polytechnic and the schools came also the proliferation of campus cult groups. There have been various splinter groups from the original root cult. At that time, this pioneer Universities based secret cults set a laudable pace, enhancing special activities on the campus while maintaining discipline and orderliness at the same time.

The first of these proliferated campus cult groups in the words of Fasina (1998) was the "Eiye Confraternity". "Eiye meaning a bird according to Fasina is seen from three symbolic dimensions.

1. Creature of freedom as manifested by the decampee and
2. Attribution of power of witchcraft to bird
3. (Ostensibly the Pyrates)

Today in our educational institutions – be they Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and even in many secondary schools, there is a legion of secret cult societies of various shades and sizes. These secret societies have existed for different reasons and purposes (Ogunade, 2002). Apart from the traditional cult groups aforementioned in previous sections of this paper many student's campus cults are now existing on the University campuses in parts of the world. In the United States of America for example we have cult groups like the Flat Hat Club (founded in 1750, Phil Bada Kappo founded in 1776, one of the famous members of the FHC was Thomas Jefferson the third president of the USA. Quoting Ogundimu et al (2005), "according to the Daily Times of 11 February, 1998, at least Twenty Nine cult groups now flood our institution of learning, including all ladies outfits". Still speaking in the same vein, the Tribune of Sunday" September, 1998 published 47 secret cult organizations in addition to the thirty two new groups operating on our campuses.

Then, the Quarterly Review of April – June 1998 published names of the first generation cult, the latter day cults and the mixed and all female cult groups operating within the Nigerian School system.(Ogundimu, Opeogun and Odedeji (2005).

The same authority put the number of collegiate cults in Nigeria at fifty nine. The figure may be higher. Interestingly, however, when other campus cult groups emerged, the traditional objectives for which the Pyrate confraternity was known started to change. Consequently, their operations, activities, organizations and what they stand for also changed with time. As shown by the slogans of some of them, the campus secret societies as they exist in Nigeria presently deviate from the slogans of the traditional secret societies.

The former have slogans such as no friend, no foe, no bribe, no play, blood for blood; kill and quench; to mention but a few.

Therefore, rather than helping the society or community to which they belong, they instill fear into people and make life miserable for non members of the society at large.

### 4. The Reasons for the Alarming Growth Rate of Campus Cults in Nigeria

Man in the opinion of Ajayi (2010) in his natural state is very unique, dynamic and restive. Wherever he goes, he makes his presence felt. Human beings are different in their nurture and idiosyncrasies'. Due to their varying backgrounds, needs, abilities and capabilities they have different perspectives of life.

The conditions of life of different social strata influence the psychological make up and need dispositions of their members Ogungbemi (2010).

Several factors have been suggested as contributing to the quests of modern youth for meaning and identity via cults. According to Bond (1980), each of these factors relates to disenchantment with or less of meaning of traditional ways of viewing reality. The contributing elements include unstable political environment of Nigeria, evidence of top level political corruption lack of political will to fight the prevalent social ills within the state, influence of western culture, widespread drug abuse among youths which tend to foster the formation of drug subcultures stressing esoteric experience, the rapid expansion of social media technological innovations which tend to erode the individuals sense of being in control of his or her own life.

Ogunbameru (1997) identified four major reasons why students join secret cults.

- Offending cult members are usually protected against sanctions.
- Membership confers respect and recognition on those who join.
- Cults are platforms for securing chain of female friends
- Cults provide avenues for financial assistance.

In line with the above submissions, Fasole (1997) explained extensively the pull factors responsible for proliferation of cult gangs in our institutions under the following sub themes;

- The influence of the society
- Family responsibilities
- Undue protection
- Creation of fears
- Terrorism
- Demon possessed children
- Support offered by school administrators
- Unsuspecting students
- Craving for ill gotten wealth

Other reasons advanced by other scholars include the desire to create an atmosphere of power and protection the desire to have fame (Ogunade 2009). Harsh economic situating particularly students in higher institutions. The infiltration and suppression or lack of democratic and independent virile unions in our tertiary institution, the military mentality and militancy acquired over the years by the Nigeria society due to long years of military interregnum. In fact patrons of collegiate cult groups were once members during their school days on campus (Allen 2012).

These prominent citizens provide the necessary support which these cults need to operate and these campus cults are sustained by the finances of these prominent citizens.

The members of cultic activities are fanned by weak and near absence of effective legislation against the menace. Perpetrators have not been commensurately sanctioned by law for the gravity of their crimes. Decree 47 of 1989 on student union activities (control and regulation) stipulates that any student or person who commits an offence under the decree shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding #50,000 or imprisonment for a term of five years or to both such fine and imprisonment.

In corollary law against cultism was promulgated (a bill for the secret cults tribulation and special provisions law of 1989 by Ogun State government for instance. The law in section 5 specifies inter alia:

Any person or student who commits an offence under this section shall be liable on conviction to imprisonment for seven years without any option of fine.

The most pathetic aspect of the above legislations is that nobody to the best of our knowledge has ever been tried under them even when cult related violence was everyday occurrences in our institutions of learning between 1999 and 2010 in Ogun State.

Aside from ineffective and in-effectual nature of these laws the punishment stipulated falls short of the crimes of cultism for instance the case of murder or wanton destruction that runs into millions of naira by cult members is not adequately compensated for by either five or seven year jail term or #50,000 fine an amount that is a token to the sponsors of secret cults (Faloye and Ogunmo 2005).

What is more? Pieces of information gathered from various newspaper articles and people opinion polls show that the causes for the students joining secret cults, its increases and multiplication include:

Emergence of new companies

Personality cash

Leadership style of cult heads

The death of morality

Peer group influence

Collapse of family institutions (Rotimi 2005)

Babs (2008), (1999), Shetime (2000)

For the sake of emphasis, I will summarily share the thoughts of notable Nigerian school administrators on factors responsible for our students joining campus cult groups. The first is Prof. Chukwuemeka when discussing the management of the universities in the 1990's as quoted by Ojo (1995).

On shortage of accommodation as a cause; many hostels in Nigerian universities cannot claim to provide healthy/learning environment for their students. The officials' student allocation to each room often exceeds the members for which the room was originally built. Unauthorized occupants (which could be cult members) aggravate the situations apart from the negative psychological effects the slim environment has on students (breeding ground for social outfits).

Professor J.F. Ade Ajayi in his "The past in the present the factor of tradition in development" says that the child is affected by

The breakdown of the old family compound where the grandparent and a host of other people were resident and joined in playing the role of brother and the increasing pressure of present day of life in which most mothers have to go outside the home compound to earn a living.

Therefore when the home is falling the child gets others from outside who infuse them with anti social norms and values.

Lastly on this issue what has transformed the Nigerian student from highly cultured gentlemen to the ruffian and thug? Part of the answer lies in what John Dewey said: The obvious fact is that our social life has undergone a thorough and radical change. If our education is to have meaning for life it must pass through an equally complete transformation.



### 5. Management of Cult Related Problem in Our Schools

One of the cardinal objectives of a university is to train its students in both character and learning and as it has been shown that character is a very important requirement in the award of university degrees and diplomas. (University of Ibadan, student information book 1981 – 1982).

The student information handbook of this institution of higher learning talking on “student conduct and discipline says:

Although the university is committed to the full support of the constitutional rights of its members....for this reason, the university is mentally concerned about the actions of individuals and groups of individuals which may be in conflict with the welfare and integrity of the university or in disregard of the rights of other members of the handbook..... each members should recognize that as he prizes right and fraction for himself, so also is he to respect the right and freedom of others.

If the principles stated above had been scrupulously observed, most of the problem emanating from the student cult activities would have been averted on the grounds that while students have the right to join groups of their choice, other have the right to use the campus and not be chased off it or molested by secret cult members (Ojo 1995).

Similarly, the University of Maiduguri students Handbook 1988/1990 also provides that: “it is expected that each student in the university will abide by the university regulations and assist his/her fellow students to do likewise. Every student should be individually held responsible for his or her actions”.

This implies that if a student breaches any university rule or regulation, or the laws of the land he or she shall be held personally liable for his or her actions. Hence, universities all over the country have a wide range of punishment for a wide range of acts of misconducts like cultism. But mismanagement of matters or issues affecting mismanaging legal aspect of the student disciplinary committee (SDC) has often resulted in litigation and unnecessary loss of cases (Ojo 1995).

Academic freedom is fragile; hence it must always be protected from attacks by extremists of whatever persuasion who would negate this essential freedom of inquiry by their coercive and disruptive actions which interfere with the right and freedom of others. For this reason, education institutions: universities, polytechnics, colleges of education etc must have established procedures for various activities and these must be adhered to and any person guilty of a breach is deemed guilty of misconduct.

### 6. Establishment of the Consultative Committee on Community Development

Management of cult related issues in our schools should be not only be reactive but proactive as well. More often than not, management of cult related problems by the authority and management of our institutions are in the worst medicine after death.”

The establishment of the consultative committee on community development in campus will go a long way in reducing the huge loss suffered by the society due to incessant strikes by cult gangs in our institutions, disruption of academics calendar cum date of graduation disdain for our certificates locally and internationally, and dislocation of economic life wire of the immediate local environment of the institutions. In this direction, the community has to be;

- (i) Informed immediately about the nature of the planned society / group, the date and commencement of operation;
- (ii) Assured that there would be no violence against any member of the community or damage to any institution property; and
- (iii) Fully involved in the security and registration of intending members of such evolving group/society.

### 7. Outlawing Sales of Hard Drugs within and Around the School Campus

Again, some of the factors that have aided violent cult clashes in their bid for power are drugs, excessive consumption of alcohol in a rather permissive environment, lack of supervision by the authorities, lack of courage on the part of school authorities to deal with culprits, most especially if they are well connected and above all support by the media. (Edward, 2009). Despite the fact that it is an offence to smoke Indian Hemp or take Cocaine and other hard drugs, it is very rare to get students being prosecuted for such illegal acts more especially by the school authorities (Ojo 1995).

This laissez faire attitude has emboldened more of the students to indulge in these nefarious activities even to the extent of cult gangs carrying weapons into and around the school campus.

Security within and around the school premises should be beefed up and the power of search which is used to curb the excesses of students in other climes like the United states should be introduced in Nigeria. If the United States could give ruling in favour of searches despite the constitutional protections afforded by Federal and State constitutional protections, its seems unfortunate that student who commit such acts with impunity in Nigeria are allowed not only to go scot free but are also not prevented from polluting other innocent minds in this orgy (Ojo 1995).

Speaking in the same vein, Ojo opined that if the student union activities (control and regulations) decree, 1989, is to work effectively, school authorities should have the right to search student’s hostel, school bags and lecture rooms and to accost for questioning and search students who are reasonably suspected of taking hard drugs or who are in the possession of such, He is of the opinion also that the Nigeria Universities could, may be, imitate the statute enacted by the California state which regulated the secret societies in public school which unlike our decree 47 (1989) which is restricted to students in higher institutions or universities. The statute state inter alia;

“From and after the passage of the act, it shall be unlawful for any pupils, enrolled as such in any elementary or secondary school of this state, to join or become a member of any secret fraternity sorority or club, wholly or partly formed from membership of pupils attending such public schools, or to take part in the organization or formation of any such fraternities, sorority or secret clubs”.

One would suggest that such laws should be made applicable to the primary and secondary schools as well. This will greatly impede the way students rush to join secret cults.

### 8. Roles of Parents / Guardians

Parents and guardians as agents of socialization should be responsible stakeholders in the education sector of a nation. This group should uphold the fraternity rules of the church and mosque and inculcate it in their wards. It is their eternal duties to emphasize that secret societies can have a detrimental influence on the school by tending to destroy good order, discipline and scholarship. They may be considered anti-democratic in their exclusiveness and out of place in a public school open to all on equal terms.

Abubakar (2010), observed that parents and guardians should be involved by the school authority in the control and management of any secret society. The student should also be made to sign a deed of undertaking to refrain and abstain from secret cults/societies in which their parents or guardians serve as guarantors to ensure they abide by the declaration which is made in good faith.

### 9. Religious Bodies/ Guidance and Counselling

Our churches and mosque are agents of moral rejuvenation. So, this assignment should be performed with renewed vigour through prayers and teaching. However, there are allegations that religious teaches have recourses to both cultism and morality which is a low ebb (Adeboye, 2005). While churches and mosque increase by leaps and bounds. The religious leaders should be worthy examples of what they preach. Meanwhile, the presence of guidance counselors in the institutions and society is of utmost importance. Counsellors as behaviours change agents are trained to handle the excesses of youth exuberance in the society. They can guide parents on the benefits of united homes and evils of broken ones. If the home is intact, parents can inculcate good morals in their wards. Outside home, such wards are likely to exhibit the good behaviour from home. Experienced guidance counselor should be available at both institutional and at a societal level (Ajeyalemi, 1997).

### 10. Secret Cults on Campus: Which Way?

From the analysis so far, the menace of secret cults of campus have deep rooted origins and may not be easily got rid off, as many scholars have argued. For example institutions have made rules and regulations which the courts have upturned when applied in almost every case.

If sanctions are applied to locally proven members of secret cults, the courts will have to administration in instilling discipline, ethnics and values in the students through normal channels. A good example is the parents' forum in the tertiary institution and parents – teachers associations at the primary/secondary schools.

In addition, parent and guardians in the words of many scholars (2009), should know that if their sons and daughters are involved in secret societies or cultism they would be expelled and if they commit criminal offences in the process would also be prosecuted. This would help to keep them on their toes, since most of the time parents and guardians do not follow up the activities of the children while in school. They do not even request for their semester reports (for undergraduates). They assume they must be attending classes. The time according to Kolawole (1998), has gone when parents would just leave their children and wards at college believing that teachers are loco parentis.

They should visit the campus from time to time to see what their children are doing.

Other areas that we should consider include the following:

### 11. Matriculation Oath Taking

There is also a basic and substantially fundamental issue that certificates are awarded when a graduating student has been found worthy both in character and learning. The students have always been made to understand this so that they are not kept under the illusion that it is sufficient to go through their institution solely on the basis of scholarship. This coupled with the incorporation into matriculation oath a clause that a student should not be a member of any secret society throughout his course in the college. In addition, every matriculate should be made to sign a deed denouncing membership and uphold the proofs or else the case would be reversal. if the culprit was continually rusticated from the institution he still has the opportunity to register in another one in the country. But in a situation in which when a student loses the chance of studying in any institution in the country, he still remained a Nigeria as such, decrees; regulations may not have significant effects on the eradication of secret cults.

It is this motion that informs the preference of the following as antidote to solve this solid cancerous cankerworm. In addition to all the aforementioned earlier on

- a. Conducting interviews for all new entrants into the university or college to obtain information about the candidates: bio-data, socio and academic date;
- b. Obtaining security reports on the background of each of the candidates.
- c. Provision of modern and sophisticated security gadgets for campus security officers coupled with the establishment of powerful surveillance and monitoring system on campuses.
- d. Monitor and obtain adequate information about members of staff and their activities.
- e. Establish codes of conducts for both the teachers, the students and the non academic staff in our schools, make them available to all the stakeholders, and severe sanctions meted out to erring stakeholders.
- f. Communicate information about any dismissed student/ staff on the basis of membership of secret club to all institutions of learning in the country and to the law enforcement agencies.
- g. Organize good counseling sessions for students involving qualified guidance counselor, parents, religious and community leaders.

- h. Infiltrate the ranks of suspected campus cult organizations.
- i. Establishment of responsive and proactive school management culture.

### 12. The Need to Revamp Education

If the government give the issue of education a place of top priority in the scheme of things in our polity, the incessant strikes by all category of workers in our institutions of learning, lecturer, non-academic staff, senior staff e.t.c can be reduced to barest minimum with its attendant risk of pushing our students into all manner of social vices (cultism, robbery, prostitution etc.)

Books should be made available in the libraries, equipment be made available in the laboratories and learning atmosphere made favourable, no student will go into cultism since they are more likely to be productively engaged. Some have even argued that some students go into cultism because of lack of adequate challenge in their academic works.

### 13. Make the Economy Work

One of the reasons some students give for wanting to become “professional” students and later cult members is that there is no need to hurry out of college. Students are known to graduate into unemployment in Nigeria, hence some of them want to stay for as long as they can in College and University. And it is the category of such student that form the bulk of cult members. If the country’s economy is in good shape, college graduates can get employment, the urge to finish in time and go to work may discourage them joining cult group. In the word of RadharKrishnan

If our civilization perishes, it will not be due to ignorance of what is needed to save it. It will be due to resistance to adopting the remedy, even when it appears to be dying.

Cultism is neither a Nigeria peculiarity nor a recent resurgence . It had always been in existence right from the ancient civilization era down to the present day. A common point on convergence among scholars who had cause to examine cultism its being a devotion to and veneration of a deity, god or supernatural object or even a person (Miller and Mitter, 1973). Moreso, Ancient and Western civilizations had their inventories of cultic activities notable among which were the Greek cult of Dionysus, the Canaanite Baal worship , the Chinese secret societies, the Egyptian magic cults. In black African Societies as earlier reflected in this paper, instances of familiar cultic practices with socio-cultural intent abound.

Liberia is famous for its Poro cult, there is the elephant ceremony in a section of Cameroun; Ethiopia is renowned for its Bori magic cult and old Dahomey had various types of ritual cults Right here in Nigeria we have the Ekpe society cult among the Efiks; a section of Delta state has the Orim cult; there is the Oduzi Obodo group Eastern Nigeria. In Western Nigeria, there is familiar Ogboni Ogboni cult practiced in all the Yoruba states of Ondo, Osun, Ogun, Oyo, Ekiti, Kwara and Lagos. In recent times, there are new organizations, some with national outlook like the AMORC or the Rosicrucian. Lodge, the Eremasons and the Reformed Ogboni Fraternity.

Having established the fact that the blossoming of cultism in our Campuses is not unrelated to the society that breeds the participants in these despicable and heinous activities. From the submission of the paper, it has been established cultism is not alien to our societies since it is part of the social goals. In our institution of higher learning, the pioneer cult members established it to achieve positive goals. The story is different today. The paper also affirms flat cultism is now viewed as an off shoot of a decadent society. It has created menace to peace and harmony in the society, especially in the ivory tower. Thus, a frantic effort should be made by all and sundry to stamp-out and refrains activities of cult members.

Moreso, this paper also believes in the re-introduction of a positive alternative against the backdrop of cultic traditional African tradition; the paper believes sincerely in the traditional African societies as harbingers of peaceful coexistence.

### 14. Strong Stakeholders Advocacy

There is the urgent need for a national moral rebirth, through a conscious social engineering in governance and followership.

The Nigeria society at large engenders equity, patriotism, moral rectitude and trust in the common good. The enabling environment must necessarily be provided to ennoble the behaviour of the Nigerian students.

Again, efforts must be geared towards cultivating the dwindling fear of God especially among the youths thereby assisting to remove the unpleasant circumstances placed on them by the society at large not excluding the parents, teachers, and the authorities at the various institutions of higher learning.

The effort of parents, teachers and authorities must be that of cooperation and collaboration if the attempt at charting better ways of influencing good moral behaviour and excellence at work is to be attained. A good example is the introduction of Parents- Teachers Forum which has been introduced at the institutions of higher learning of Nigeria since 1967 when Moshood Abiola blazed the trail.

The role of women as mothers in moulding of character of our students cannot be over-emphasized.

..... Statistics indicates that women are prime moulders

Of the psyche of their individual, families and nations,

And they are better equipped to deal positively with

moral and psychology of our youths.

(Onari Duke, Comet, Oct. 6, 20-3, p.37)

Due to complexity of social backgrounds of students, Tresslan D.L. (1986, p.334) advocates that all participants of social organizations include those found on campuses of institutions of higher learning in Nigeria “should be encouraged to play active roles in the control process of these maintenance systems” in this instance of discipline on campus.

Finally, students – individually and collectively – should endeavour to conscientise them with the aim of living good life both within and outside the campus, and any behaviour which is anti-social must be dealt with according to the laws of the land.

This is to ensure social justice and brighter future for the majority of Nigerian students who often pride themselves as the future leaders of the Nation.

### 15. Summary and Conclusion

This paper attempts at highlighting the historical background is to the issue of cultism on the campuses of tertiary institutions of learning in Nigeria and especially the synergy between the two issues – moral attitudes and campus cults; the apparent internalisation of campus gangsterism which the Nigerian society at large has chosen to label Campus Cults. Indeed, let our students be forewarned in the words of Frank A. Pinner (1968) that they should strive “not belong to the radical minority which seek to undermine society through a strategy of enlightening provocation.”

In a nutshell, the paper re-echoes the urgent need for a moral renaissance among students in particular and the need for a conscious effort on the part of parents, teachers and the authorities of Higher Institutions of learning in Nigeria by making use of some of suggestions provided in order to rise to the occasion.

In conclusion, we may have to remind ourselves of Reuben Abati’s (1994) observation and admonition that: “We (adults) must not blame and condemn our youths for their lack of temperance and idealism and most especially their knack for violence, naked opportunism as exhibited in shades of examination frauds and hedonism, rather the blame and condemnation must be thrown back at large society.”

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