MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR IN THE SCHOOL AND SOCIETY

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Abstract

This paper examines the management and control of violence behaviour in school and the society. The indices of interpersonal violence as well as suicidal behaviour and armed conflict were discussed. Violence is typified as violence a person inflicts upon himself or herself, violence inflicted by another individual or by a small group such as states, organized political groups, militia groups and terrorist organizations. To manage violence in the school, the provision of counselling services in schools was advocated. In tertiary institutions, academic and non academic staffs must all be alert and report suspected cases or movement to the authority immediately. The paper concluded that violence is often predictable and preventable as the world report on violence has shown, the paper recommends among others that:- the nations capacity for the collection and analysis of data on violence should be enhanced in order to set priorities, guidance programme designed and monitor progress and social development programmes. Such programmes are aimed at improving success at schools and relationship, social development programmes in particular are designed to help children and adolescents develop social skills, manage anger, resolve conflicts and develop a social perspective.

Introduction

Every country or community have witnessed one form of violence or the other, it is noticed in the school, the home, the work places and institutions. A clarification on the word violence is necessary here before dwelling into the discussion; the World Health Organisation (WHO) defines violence as:

> The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself another person, or against a group or community, that either result in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation (WHO 1996).

The definition encompasses interpersonal violence as well as suicidal behaviour and armed conflict. It also cover a wide range of acts to include threats and intimidation. Besides death and injury the definition also includes the myriads

and often less obvious consequences of violent behavior, such as psychological harm, deprivation and maldevelopment that compromise the well being of individuals, families and communities.

Ekoja (2009), opined that, despite the fact that violent conflicts have always been present, the world does not have to accept it as an inevitable part of human condition. As long as there has been violent conflicts, there have been systems including religious, philosophical, legal and communal which have grown up to prevent or limit them. None has been completely successful, but all have made there contributions to this defining mark of civilization.

Violent conflicts can be prevented and there impact reduced. The forces that contributes to violent conflict responses, whether they are factors of attitude and behaviour or related to larger social, economic, political and cultural conditions can be changed. The fact that violent conflict can be prevented is not an article of faith, built a statement based on evidence. Examples of success can be found around the world, from small scale individuals and community efforts to national policy and legislative initiatives.

Typology of Violence

The nature, intensity, complexity and variety of violent acts prompt feeling of powerlessness and apathy. An analytical framework or typology is needed to separate the varieties of this intricate typesttry so that the nature of the problem and the action required to deal with it become clearer. The typology used in the world report on violence and health divides violence into three broad categories, according to who commits the violence act: self-directed violence; interpersonal violence; and collective violence.

This initial categorization differentiates between violence a person inflicts upon himself or her self, violence inflicted by another individual or by a small groups such as States, organized political groups, militiagroups and terrorist organizations.

These three broad categories are each divided further to reflect more specific types of violence. Self directed violence includes suicidal behaviour and self abuse such as multilation. Suicidal behaviour ranges in degree from merely thinking about ending ones life, to planning it, finding the means to do so, attempting to kill oneself and completing the act. However these should not be seen as different points on a single continuum. Many people who entertain suicidal thoughts never acts on them, and even those who attempt suicide may have no intention to dying.

Interpersonal violence according to WHO (2002) is divided into sub-categories:

- Family and intimate partner violence - that is violence largely between family members and intimate partners, usually though not exclusively, taking place in the home.
- Community violence – violence between individuals who are unrelated, and who may or may not know each other, generally taking place outside the home.

While the former includes forms of violence such as child abuse, violence by an intimate partner and abuse of elderly, the later includes youth violence, random act of violence, rape or sexual assault by strangers and violence in institutional settings such as schools, work places, prisons and nursing homes.

The WHO(2002) documents further asserted that, collective violence is the instrumental use of violence by people who identify themselves as members of a group against another group or set of individuals, in order to achieve political, social or economic objectives. It takes a variety of forms: armed conflicts within or between states; genocide, repression and organized violent crime.

Managing violent behaviour in the School.

School violence as opined by Volokh and Snell (1998) includes gang activity, locker theft, bullying and intimidation, gun use, assault-just about anything that produces a victim. Violence in perpetrated against students, teachers

and staffs and ranges from intentional vendettas to accidental killings of bystanders. Different types of violence have been documented in schools globally, in Nigeria however a study by UNICEF (2007) titled "Assessments of Violence against children at the Basic Education level" the following forms of violence against children were identified;

- Physical violence – include but not limited to scratching, pushing, shoving: throwing; grabbing; biting; choking; shaking; slapping, punching; burning; use of a weapon; force sexual activity, injury or death from a weapon and use restraints or one's body size or strength against another person.

- Psychological violence - take the form of physical intimidation, controlling through scare tactics and oppression, harassment, being picked upon, laughed at, unfair treatment, constant criticism and such likely acts.

- Sexual violence – includes all forms of sexual abuse, sexual assault, pornography, prostitution, trafficking for sexual purposes, sex tourism, early and forced marriage and enslavement.

- Gender based violence - refer to injustices and all forms of un equal treatment as a result of either being male or female (e.g. giving a boy stricter punishment than a girl for the same kind of offence just because he is a boy).

- Health related violence refers to any form of stigmatization, abuse neglect, discrimination and so on as a result of a persons health status (e.g. preventing an HIV positive pupils from participating in group work or play).

The study discovered that, there is low reporting on violence among learners. The implication on the low reporting lies in the potential for highlighting rates of violence and culturation of dangerous learning environment. It is common for children to keep quite about episodes of victimization due to shame, embarrassment and fear of escalated violence. Children who are victimize in school often suffer from decreased self-esteem, truancy, depression, post traumatic stress disorder and in extreme cases, suicide and violent retaliation. This will result

in fear and illusion; drop out, problems with sleeping, eating and other bodily functions, depression, aggressiveness, anxiety and other problems in regulating emotions; difficulties with peer relationships; and problems with attention, concentration and school performance. Aside from the interfering with the learning process, the long term effect of school violence affect the whole community. Statistically, children who engage in bullying behaviour are more likely to become adults criminals. (Taub, 2002; Schwab-Stone, Chen, Greenberger, Silver, Lichtman and Voyce 1999; Farrington, 1995).

A major source of managing violent behaviour at the basic education level is the provision of counselling services in schools. However studies indicates that there is a low preference of learners to report cases of violence to the school counsellor (who in most cases are non existent).

Massive awareness creation on violence against children with a view to facilitating preventive action as well as encourage reporting acts of violence by learners. Specifically, violence free consciousness must be promoted among learners, teachers and other members of the school communities including parents. There should be regular seminars on violence prevention, publications to educate the learners and teachers on acceptable non-violent behaviour.

Another area of violence in school is in the tertiary institutions where cultism is the major social problem. The origin of cultism in the Nigerian universities can be traced to the Pyrates confraternity that was found by Nobel Laurete, Wole Soyinka and others at the University College Ibadan (now called University of Ibadan), in 1953. The confraternity which was non violent and whose activities were never shrouded in secrecy resembled the sororities and fraternities found in many American University campuses.

The aim of the pyrates confraternity were lofty and noble. They wanted an end to tribalism; colonial mentality and they wanted to revive the age of chivalry. Unfortunately towards the end of 1960's the original aims of the pyrates

confraternity were abandonede. The confraternity gradually metamorphosed into a secret cult that was later to poliferate in many splinters groups. The change was accelerated by yet other changes observable in the Nigerian society included violent military coups, state sponsored political assassinations proliferation of ethnic militia, communal clashes and total erosion of the traditional family values.

Eneji (1996), opined that almost every passing day, there are new stories of devilish acts perpetuated by secret cults on campuses. Students are attracted to cultist group for a variety of reasons. Generally the social atmosphere prevailing in the Nigerian universities as asserted by Oyewole (2003) provides an inspiring environment for secret cults to thrive. These may include lack of virile students unionism erosion of the traditional academic culture, absence of intellectual debates and all other activities that are components of traditional campus culture.

Those who eventually enlist in secret cult groups might have been compelled to do so because of "sagging egos" that need to be boosted. Other join in order to have a sense of belonging and the need to be well connected (Eneji, 1996). Still others may join because of the need for financial assistance to secure girl friends or self protection (Ogunbameru, 1997). Some students are also attracted to cult groups because they are seeking after meaning, direction, comfort and love (Omotunde, 1984). Secret cultism seems to have special attraction for youths who are emotionally disturb or distressed. As Omotunde has further observed, recruitment into secret cult group is "dressed" up like a Japanese meal with "affection", understanding and "love" which easily attract the already vunerable to the fold.

The youth, especially those from broken homes, destitutes and youngsters who have flexible mind easily fall prey to the entreaties from cult members (Omotunde 1984). Youngsters who are lonely depressed, dejected, disoriented and frightened sometimes drift into the waiting arms of secret cultist. Apart from the categories mentioned above there are some youngsters who join secret cults out of sheer

curiosity. As Eneji (1996) has observed, these who are tall and masculine and naturally tacit and those who consciously limit interaction with other students are easy prey for those recruitment "officers"

To manage cultism in our tertiary institutions, members of the various communities in our tertiary institutions, such as academic and non-academic staffs, students, security personnel, drivers, gardeners, watchmen, laborers, etc. must all be alert and report and suspected cases or movement to authorities immediately.

General education of the citizens on the corrosive effect of secret cultism must occur. Consequently, mosques, churches, school administrators and all stake holders in education must fuse efforts to combat cultism. It is also necessary and urgent to reactivate, strengthen and reinvigorate different students unions which will accommodate the interest of all students. According to Awe (2001), cultist are usually found among non union members. Also the issue of former cultist who sometimes return to universities as staff must be thoroughly investigated.

Managing violent Behaviour in the Society

In the context of this paper, violent behaviour in the society would be addressed more or less the interpersonal violence is addressed, with the following issues in focus: Domestic violence and community violence with political violence, ethnic militia and religious violence attached.

Domestic Violence

This is also known as domestic abuse, spousal abuse, child abuse or intimate partner violence (IPV) and can be broadly defines as a pattern of abusive behaviours by one or both partners in an intimate relationship such as marriage, dating, family, friends or cohabitation. Domestic violence has many forms including physical aggression (hitting, kicking, biting, shoving, restraining, slapping, throwing objects) or threats thereof; sexual abuse; emotional abuse; controlling or domineering intimidation; stalking; passive/convert abuse (e.g. neglect and economic deprivation). Domestic violence may or may not constitute a

crime, depending on local statutes, security and duration of specific act and other variables.

Many factors have been linked to a man's risk of physically assaulting an intimate. Among individual factors, a history of violence in the male partner family (particularly having seen his mother beaten an alcohol abuse by the male partner out in many studies. At an interpersonal level, the most consistent makers to emerge for partner violence are conflict or discord in the relationship and low income. It is as yet unclear why low income provide ready materials for marital disagreement or make it more difficult for women to leave violent or otherwise unsatisfactory relationship; it may also be a result of other factors that may accompany poverty such as overcrowding or hopelessness (Hottman, Demo & Edwards 1994).

Women are particularly vulnerable to abuse by their partners in the societies where there are marked inequalities between men and women, rigid gender roles, cultural norms that support men's right to sex regardless of the women's feelings, and week sanctions against such behaviours. These factors may make it difficult or dangerous for a woman to leave an abusive relationship does not guarantee safety-violence can sometimes continue and may even escalate after a woman leaves her partner.

To manage domestic violence in the society, family therapy programmes should be designed with a view to improving communications and interactions between family members, partners as well as teaching problem solving skills to assist parents and children. Also training in relationship skills programmes can be introduced in the community to bring together mixed groups of men and women with a facilitator to explore gender and relationship issues that play a part in violence, and to learn the life skills to deal with them.

Political Violence

In Nigeria, holding a political office still remains the shortest route to wealth, (Oyewole 2003). Consequently, competition for any political office is a cut throat affair among political combatants. In many cases, opponents who are perceived to be difficult to defeat through the ballot box are usually marked down for elimination through the barrels of the gun. Although this practice was introduced during the military regimes, it has survived and infact gained momentum during the current experiment in Nigeria. Oyewole (2003) has chronicled the activities of the recent political assassination in the country.

In February, 1992, the chairman of Oredo Local government in Edo state was assassinated. Also in 1997, One Lawrence Nwako, a member of Abia state house of Assembly was killed, few meters from his home. Also Barnabas Igwe, the erstwhile chairman of the Onitsha (Anambra state) branch of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA). The list includes Dele Arojo who was People Democratic Party (PDP) gubernatorial espirrant for Ogun state. In Yobe state, Adamawa Waziri, also a PDP statewart was assassinated. In the Osun state, Odunayo Olagbaju, a member of the state house of assembly was murdered in 2001. The series of political assassinations culminated in the cold blood murder of Chief Bola Ige, a prominent Nigerian politician and the attoney General. Due to the high rate of armed robbery in the country, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the cases of armed robbery and the cases of genuine political assassination. Added to the atmosphere of violence are the activities of ethnic militia which have sprung up in may parts of the country. Cultists take cues from these events.

Religious Violence

An ugly and recurring phenomena that resisted solution is religious clashes, mostly between Muslims and Christians. Owulabi (2001b) reported that on 12th October 2001 in Kano in the northern part of Nigeria, some muslims who claimed that they were protesting Americans bombing of Afghanistan set church buildings

on fire and swooped on some christians. Also in Bauchi state specifically in Balewa and Boruga local government areas, ten christians were reportedly killed by some muslims. Other incidents have occurred in Jos to which the paper do not see as religious violence rather ethnic violence by the pre-dominant oeners of the Jos land.

Common observations reveals that students takes cues from the situations described above. As Gimba (2002) has observed university students and graduates earn so much money by taking part in crime related service and contracts which there real graduates certificate would not fetch them. As mentioned earlier the spawning ground for violence related activities are also found in cult related activities. Apart from violent environment which students to have been exposed, the modern family has failed woefully in deflecting or neutralizing peer group influences which may involve cultist activities.

Ethnic and militia violence

Complicating the security and harmonious living situation in the country and contributing to the entrenchment of the culture of violence are the ethnic militia which dot the whole country. Ethnic militia are paramilitary groups who have spring up in many parts of the country as a response to the general feeling of insecurity and lack of confidence in the police and other security outfits which pervades Nigerians. Each group promotes the cause of its own ethnic group.

In the southern part of Nigeria in the Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC) which campaign the cause of the Yoruba's, in the southeast champion the cause of the Igbo race are the Bakassi vigilante group (known as the Bakassi boys) and Massobs (movement for the actualization of the sovereign state of Biafra). In the Niger Delta are the restive Ijaw Youths, the Egbesu boys, MEND, MOSOP (the movement for the survival of the Ogoni people formed in 1992. On many occasions, there are ethnic militia who are usually armed with very sophisticated

weapons usually engage the police in violent confrontations in which many lives are lost.

In October 2001, trouble erupted in Benue state where ethnic militia slaughtered 19 soldiers during a communal class between the TV and Jukun ethnic groups. Later, the soldiers were to revenge the killing of their colleagues by completely sacking Zaki-Biam community (Owulabi 2001a). Earlier in 2000, some belligerent youths in Odi, Bayelsa state had in a similar manner slaughtered 12 policemen who were sent to the area to keep the peace. Later, soldiers were sent to Odi and entire community was violently destroyed and many casualties were recorded.

In the Nigerian Tribune of the 27th March 2003, some Ijaw youths burnt down an Itsekiri community of Madangho and the Escavos Beach flow station. They also burnt down Eghoro, Ogheye and Ajudembo communities, forcing shell petroleum company to close down its flow station. In another report by the Nigeria Tribune (16th April;2003), members of MASSOB clashed with the police in Umulolo in the south eastern part of the country.

The effect of the militia violence is direct threats of death and injury posed by fighting, conflicts increase mortality and morbidity rates among civilians in a number of indirect ways. For examples conflicts destroys infrastructure and disrupt vital services such as medical care and public health, including immunization thus increasing the risk of infections disease. As a general rule, infact mortality rates rise times of conflicts.

Summerfield (1991), opined that the violence and cruelty of conflicts associated with a range of psychological and behavioural problems, including depression and anxiety, suicidal behaviour, alcohol abuse and post-traumatic distress disorder. Furthermore psychological trauma may become evident in disturbed and anti-social behaviour, such as family conflicts and aggression towards others. This situation is often exacerbrated by the availability of weapons

and by people becoming inured to violence after long exposure to conflict. The infact of conflicts on mental health is, however extremely complex and unpredictable. It is influenced by a lost of factor such as the nature of the conflicts, the cultural context and the resources that individuals and communities bring to bear on their situation.

Conclusion

Violence is often predictable and preventable as the world report on violence and health has shown, certain factors appear to be strongly predictive of violence, even if direct causality is sometimes difficult to establish. Identifying and measuring these factors can provide truly warning to decision makers that action is required. Moreover the array of tools which to take action in growing all the time as public health oriented research advances.

Upstream investment brings downstream results. There is a tendency worldwide for authorities to act only after violence has occurred. But investing in prevention-especially primary prevention activities that operates upstream of problems may be more cost-effective and have larger and long lasting benefits.

Understanding the context of violence is vital in designing interventions. All societies experience violence, but it context-the circumstances in which it occurs, its nature and society's attitude towards it varies greatly from one setting to another. Whenever prevention programmes are planned, the context must be understood in order to tailor the intervention to the targeted populations.

Recommendations

For effective management of violent behaviour in the school and society, this paper recommends the following:

i. The nations capacity for the collection and analysis of data on violence should be enhanced in order to set priorities, guidance programmes, designed and monitor progress.

ii. A national action plan is important for preventing violence and for promoting effective response that can be sustained over time.

iii. There must be adequate media campaigns to change attitudes, behaviour and social norms.

iv. Ensuring that health, judicial police and social services avoid a renewed victimization of earlier victims and that these services effectively deter perpetrators from re-offending.

v. Educational programmes: such as incentives for pupils to complete secondary schooling, vocational training for under privileged youths and young athletes, and programmes providing information about drug abuse.

vi. Social development programmes: including these to prevent bullying, as well as pre-school environment programmes. Such programmes are aimed at improving success at school and relationship, social development programmes in particular are designed to help children and adolescents develop social skills, manage anger, resolve conflicts and develop a social perspective.

vii. Therapeutic programmes: including counselling for victims of violence or for those at risk of harming themselves, support groups and behavioural therapy for depression and other psychiatric disorders associated with suicide.

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