

# UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN



## THE ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FIFTH (145TH) INAUGURAL LECTURE

### "RAISING THE BAR: THE COUNSELLORS' MANDATE"

BY

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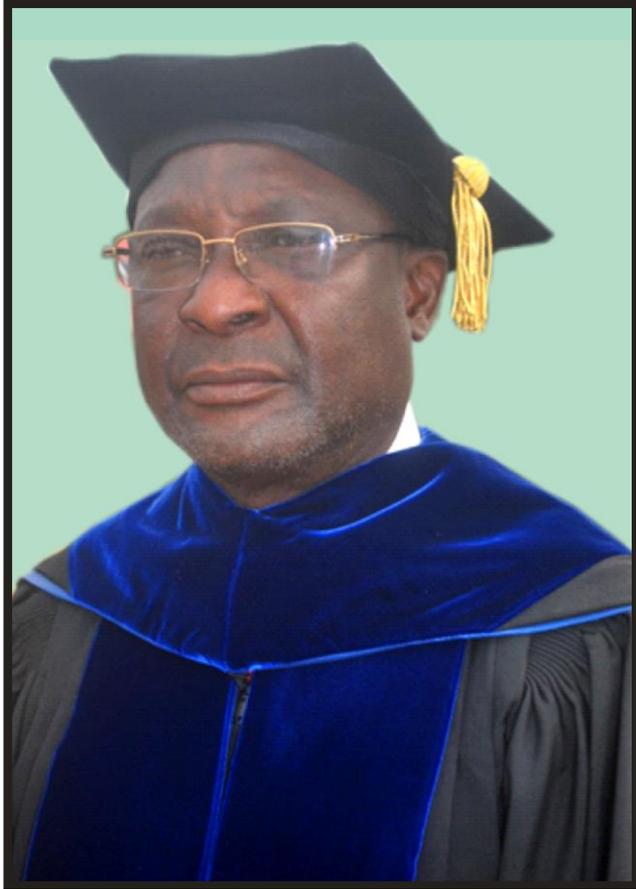
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Your Royal Majesties, Highnesses and titled Chiefs,  
My Lords, Spiritual and Temporal,  
My dear wife and other family members,  
All Counsellors (Professionals and those in-training),  
Gentlemen of the Print and Electronic Media,  
Esteemed Invited Guests and Friends,  
Great Unilorites,  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

## **Preamble**

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I stand before you thoroughly humbled but with exceeding gratitude to God Almighty for sparing my life till today to present this inaugural lecture. My story is a simple but interesting one. I was pronounced a Professor of Guidance and Counselling of this University on the 1st of October, 1994. In another six months or so, I would be a professor for twenty years. It all looks like yesterday but I give all honour, glory and adoration to our great creator for making it possible for me to still give this lecture.

I want to place on record the tremendous support and encouragement that I have received at the University of Ilorin

from all past and serving Vice-Chancellors. I am happy about the phenomenal growth and transformation that has taken and is taking place in the University, which has made it the institution of first choice by all prospective admission seekers. I must salute the courage, hardwork and commitment of the builders of this great citadel of learning and I am sure that all those who have contributed to the development in one way or the other are today full of joy. As for me, I was appointed an Assistant Lecturer on the 1st of May, 1979; was promoted Lecturer II in 1981, Lecturer I in 1984; Senior Lecturer in 1987; Reader in 1991 and Professor in 1994. Within this period, I was appointed Acting/Head of Department three times, was elected Dean of Education twice (1998-2002), Chairman, Committee of Deans (2001-2002) and Senate Representative on the Governing Council (2000-2004). I have taught, trained and supervised at least 12 doctoral graduates, many of whom are here today. I have counselled students/clients with various behavioural deficits and have been involved in major Counselling/Education policy formulations as well as the organisation and management of various Counselling interventions in Nigeria. I have served in almost all the Committees, Workshops and Seminars organised by government through the Federal Ministry of Education (FME), National Council on Education (NCE), Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), National Universities Commission (NUC) etc, to address pertinent and pressing issues in counselling.

It is necessary at this juncture to also mention that I have been professionally active as well. I was at various times Publicity Secretary (1986-1990), Secretary General (1990-1994), Ex-Officio Member (1994-1998) and National President (2000-2004) of the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON). I am a Fellow of the Association and was on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March, 2013, appointed a member of the Association's Board of Trustees (BOT).

Given the above details, Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, it is clear that this lecturer has seen it all in the advent and growth of the counselling movement in Nigeria. This forms part of the reasons for the presentation of this lecture at this time and the choice of the topic.

I have titled the lecture, “Raising the Bar: The Counsellors’ Mandate”. Let me state that since April, 1984, when I earned my doctoral degree in Counsellor Education (minoring in Rehabilitation Counselling) at the University of Pittsburgh, USA, I have been led by my conviction that everyone, everywhere needs counselling, no matter how rudimentary, to function fully. I am convinced that it is the responsibility of all counsellors to ensure that Guidance and Counselling services are made available to all citizens. This lecture herein raises and attempts to answer fundamental issues in Guidance and Counselling, especially as it relates to its practice. The bar has to be raised if counsellors must continue to strive for relevance in our educational system and in our ever-changing Nigerian society.

### **Basic Concepts: Guidance, Counselling and the Counsellor**

For one to truly appreciate the import of this lecture, there is a need for the basic concepts that form the nucleus of Guidance and Counselling to be clearly delineated and explained. Guidance and Counselling have been described or defined separately or as a unit by various authors in various ways. In fact, there are as many definitions of each or of both terms as there are practising Guidance Counsellors in this hall or elsewhere.

Guidance is defined as the process of helping individuals achieve the self- understanding and self-direction necessary to make the maximum adjustment to school, home and the community. To achieve this goal, the school guidance programme (a) makes a systematic and comprehensive study of

its pupils; (b) provides them with a wide variety of information about themselves and their educational, social and vocational opportunities; (c) offers them the opportunity to receive individual assistance through counselling, and render services of an information, training and research nature to the school, staff, parents and community agencies in order to help them meet the needs of these pupils (Idowu, 2004).

This shows that guidance refers to the total programme of activities aimed at raising the consciousness of the pupils/students to truly appreciate their value and worth.

Counselling, on the other hand, has been defined by Makinde (1985) as “an enlightened process whereby counsellors help people by facilitating growth, development and positive change through an exercise of self-understanding” (p.3). With some emphasis on interactive contact, Idowu (1985b; 2004) and Olayinka (1983) defined counselling as the process in which one person assists another person in a person-to-person or face-to-face encounter. This assistance, they stressed, may take various forms: it may be educational, vocational, social, recreational, emotional and/or moral.

Counselling involves helping an individual become more fully aware of him/herself and the ways he/she is responding to the influences in his/her environment. It further assists him/her to establish some personal meaning for his/her behaviour and to develop and clarify a set of goals and values for future behaviour (Idowu, 2004). Counselling is the service offered to the individual who is undergoing a problem and needs professional help to overcome it. The problem keeps him/her disturbed, hamstrung and under tension and unless solved, his/her development is hampered or stunted (Idowu, 1985b). Counselling, therefore, is a more specialized service requiring training in personality development and handling exceptional groups of individuals.

From the foregoing definitions of Guidance and Counselling, one can identify some areas of similarities and

differences between the two concepts. Guidance and Counselling have come to be regarded as inseparable twins. Why? First, the focus of both Guidance and Counselling is on the individual or group. Second, Guidance and Counselling is a helping relationship. These similarities, notwithstanding, it is necessary to note that:

- Guidance throws light into the nature of a client's problem while Counselling throws light into the ways of solving it (Idowu, 1985b; Idowu&Esere, 2007);
- Guidance is cognitive in nature while Counselling is affective (in nature);
- Guidance services can take place almost anywhere while counselling can only take place in a private and conducive environment;
- confidentiality is assured in Counselling while this may not be so in guidance.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, let us take special note from the delineated differences between Guidance and Counselling, that *professional counselling services can only be rendered by trained counsellors*. In other words, Counselling is not an all-comers affair. It is a specialised concept and requires skills and expertise on the part of the counsellor to be effectively carried out. It is common these days to hear of all sorts of individuals who call themselves counsellors – a visit to our churches, mosques, playgrounds, youth centres etc. will give us ample examples. Are these really counsellors? This is the crux of the matter. If it is agreed that a counsellor is a professionally trained person who provides useful services to clients based on their needs, the understanding of their immediate environment and its influences, what then constitutes the roles and functions of these practitioners? This is the focus of the next segment of this lecture.

The terms **role** and **function** have been used almost synonymously in the literature and in most counselling discussions. It is only recently that writers are beginning to look

at the terms separately with a view to highlighting their specifications. Idowu (1989b) simply defined a role as a part one plays in any given position, social situation or social relationship. Thus, it seems that a role may be perceived as a concrete set of expected behaviours.

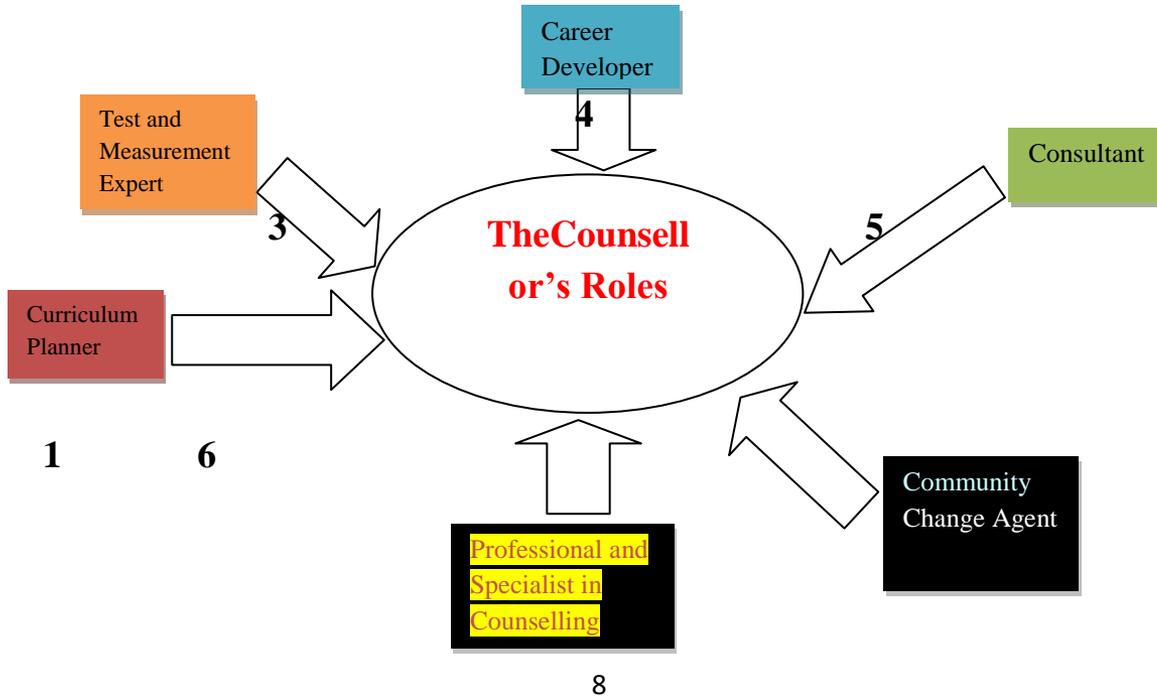
What then is a function? Ipaye (1986) stated that a function refers to the activities assigned to a role. In this lecture therefore, it is assumed that in playing a role, an individual is also carrying out a set of activities (functions). Who then should determine counsellors' roles and functions? If a role is a set of expected behaviours, it is expected that, apart from counsellors themselves, employers or consumers of counselling services would have an input in defining counselling roles through their various expectations (Idowu, 1989b). Thus, one would expect that in Nigeria, employers of counsellors may be involved in defining counsellors' roles because they are responsible for hiring counsellors for a specific set of well-defined tasks.

On the other hand, if functions are seen as the activities in which professionals are engaged in performing their roles, then judgement of the functions to be performed remains the prerogative of the professionals themselves as long as they fulfil appropriate culture and institution-bound expectations of the role. This lecturer affirms that the professional body of Counsellors (e.g. CASSON) should play a major role in defining counsellors' functions because it ensures that counsellors are trained to exercise judgement in determining how best to utilise their skills and qualifications as well as to conform to the varying settings where their specific functions match the existing situations.

It is expected that the functions of counsellors would differ from setting to setting, i.e. the function of a counsellor in a school would differ from that of an industrial counsellor; and that within a given setting, e.g. in the schools, individual counsellors may function differently according to the school's characteristics. Thus, it is also expected that the approaches and

procedures employed by counsellors in the same setting may differ to suit individual client needs and the collective institutional needs.

Idowu (1989b) has highlighted six main roles of Counsellors in Nigerian schools, and contained within each of these roles are specific functions expected of them:



**1. The School Counsellor Plays the Role of a Professional and Specialist in Counselling:** Counselling is the main domain of the school counsellor and anything that has to do with this service MUST be performed by the Counsellor. The Counsellor is expected to devote a great deal of his/her time to counselling. Just in the same way that a teacher in a school is employed to guide and stimulate students' learning, so also is a school Counsellor employed to use his/her skills to assist students to resolve their everyday problems or conflicts which have been, or may be obstructing their search for learning (Idowu&Dere, 1983). In individual counselling, the school counsellor seeks to assist students on a one-to-one basis to resolve problems and concerns of an educational, vocational, social, emotional or moral nature under optimal conditions of confidentiality and mutual trust. In essence, helping students to become more fully aware of themselves and the ways in which they respond to the influences of the environment is basically the sole responsibility of the counsellor (Idowu, 1985b).

Under no circumstance, Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, should counselling with students and/or staff be left to para-professionals or other auxiliary staff members. All professional counsellors are assumed to have undergone sound training in the use of various skills/techniques and they should learn to put such skills/techniques into use in their roles as counsellors (Idowu, 1989b).

**2. The Counsellor Plays the Role of a Curriculum Planner:** Counsellors should be active in the development and implementation of school curriculum activities and programmes designed to facilitate students' development. Counsellors should be involved in all stages of curriculum development and the professional body, CASSON, should take a position regarding the operation of any curricular innovation. This is so because most of the curricular course offerings in our schools are designed to develop students' intellectual ability only, without due consideration for their emotional and physical well-being.

Counsellors' participation in such matters helps to ensure that course offerings are broad-based and that assessment procedures cover all the three domains of learning. Extra-curricular activities are educative and they can be meaningfully structured to serve a complementary function to the school curriculum.

### **3. The Counsellor Plays the Role of a Test and Measurement**

**Expert:** Tests are mainly used in schools as a means of evaluation and of determining individual student's needs (Idowu, 1990b). When tests are seen only in the narrow perspective of examinations and quizzes, they become anxiety-producing and they may tend to scare students and parents (Idowu&Alao, 1986; Idowu, 2009; Idowu&Esere, 2009). The 6-3-3-4 system of education (now 9-3-4) places a lot of emphasis on testing (especially on the Continuous Assessment component) and this aspect should be a major function of counsellors. Counsellors are expected to play a significant role in co-ordinating the accumulation, development and effective use of meaningful data through the use of tests and non-test devices for the smooth implementation of the Continuous Assessment of students at all levels of the secondary school. Continuous assessment information provides a useful veritable tool in helping to make transition decisions on students from JSS (to SSS) or from SSS to further education or employment (Idowu&Esere, 2011). All the vital information needed in helping students to understand their strengths and weaknesses - their abilities, interests, interpersonal relationships etc - is derived through testing. However, counsellors should be cautious when using specialized tests - e.g. Intelligence tests and Projective Techniques - as they are usually fraught with errors (Idowu, 1988a; 1990b; 2009).

It is known that in some states of the Federation, career masters/mistresses are being trained on a short-term basis. It should be highlighted here that such trainees are only para-professionals whose roles are to assist counsellors in schools. They should not be made to serve in place of counsellors, and in testing, they can only assist in administration and probably

scoring of some psychological tests. Career masters/mistresses possess no competency in interpreting psychological tests. It is the responsibility of counsellors to interpret all data obtained from the Cumulative Record Folders (CRF), as they have been exposed to this in their training programmes

**4. The Counsellor Plays the Role of a Career Developer:** The school system provides a medium through which students can be trained toward a goal which usually ends in a career. The school counsellor with a developmental purpose prepares students using their educational resources to attain a career choice (Idowu, 1983; 1984, 1985d, 1989a). This is done through services such as: (a) information gathering, analysis and synthesis; (b) orientation; (c) vocational development and career education; and (d) placement (see Idowu, 2004).

**5. The Counsellor plays the Role of a Consultant:** Consultation is the key description of the counsellor's work especially since he/she is skilled and has all the student-school-related information in his/her care. Using the Cumulative Record Folder (CRF), the counsellor serves as consultant to parents, employers and the community on students. If there are ambiguities about students' behaviour in and out of school, the counsellor is able to provide clarifications on such matters and can also serve as a referee to students when they apply for jobs, admission to other institutions, scholarships etc.

**6. The Counsellor Plays the Role of a Community Change Agent:** The counsellor is a helping professional who advances the personal development of individuals. When he/she does this in and out of the school for the benefit of students, staff, parents and the community, then he/she becomes an agent of change for the community. This the counsellor does by maintaining community contacts to be able to identify resources which are useful for individual student development and for effective change in behaviour. The counsellor maintains a list of referral agencies and personnel within the community to which students can be referred.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, esteemed guests, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, it is clear from the discussion so far that the basic issue that any school counsellor must address concerns his/her role and functions. As stated in the National Policy on Education, does the school counsellor want only to play the role of a career expert and a behaviour modifier or does he/she want to add other responsibilities? Should the counsellor be an advice-giver? A teacher's helper? A disciplinarian? Should he/she play all these roles at the same time or at different times? There seems to be no simple or straight-forward answers to these questions. In seeking answers to these questions, a problem that counsellors may have to contend with has to do with their view of their roles when it is in congruence or in conflict with that dictated by the school. There is usually no problem when the roles as perceived by the counsellor and the school are congruent. However, when for example, the principal wants the counsellor to be the disciplinarian, the secretary of the PTA, or the librarian, these duties may limit the time the counsellor has to do his/her real work. In such instances, it should be the responsibility of the counsellor to define his/her role or provide for scrutiny by the principal the general guidelines prescribed for the profession as outlined by CASSON.

### **RAISING THE BAR: Counselling and the Teacher Education Programmes**

In the National Policy on Education (2004, Revised), the Federal Government of Nigeria endorsed its total commitment to and support for the guidance and counselling movement. Number 101; paragraph J (Section 11) of the document states:

In view of the apparent ignorance of many young people about career prospects, and in view of personality maladjustment among school children, career officers and counsellors will be appointed in post-primary institutions..... Guidance and Counselling will also feature in teacher education programme. (p.53)

It is in furtherance of government's commitment towards counsellor training that guidance and counselling departments were set up in some universities. At present, some universities in Nigeria are offering certificate and degree programmes in Guidance and Counselling.

Much as government seems to have tried her best for counselling, one question has always remained unanswered, "Has guidance and counselling featured in teacher education programmes as stated in the National Policy on Education? The answer is No. Courses in guidance and counselling are not offered in all teacher training programmes. Even in universities that award Guidance and Counselling degrees, students majoring in other aspects of education only offer one or two courses in guidance and counselling. It is no surprise, therefore, that in Colleges of Education, Technical Teacher Training Colleges and Grade Two Teachers' Colleges (where they still exist), there are no specific provisions in the curriculum for guidance and counselling courses. Idowu (1986b; 2009) has advocated that guidance and counselling courses are inevitable in teacher education programmes of Nigerian universities. Idowu (1995a) highlighted the positive role that guidance and counselling plays in the development of Nigerian university students. This recommendation, I am glad to state here, has been achieved to some extent in that it is mandatory for all students in Colleges of Education to offer at least a 2 unit course in Guidance and Counselling, but this is not enough. Colleges of Education constitute a vital network for the training of teachers in Nigeria.

If Teacher Education programmes are expected to set the pace for quality teacher production for Nigerian schools, and if guidance and counselling is as crucial as most educators, educationists and government agents have stated, then there is the need to re-examine our various teacher education curricula with a view to justifying the inclusion of a guidance and counselling component.

As pre-service teachers, education students in colleges of education and universities are expected to display skills in learning subject matter as well as acquire competence in fully understanding their pupils. Skills in learning subject matter are usually acquired through didactic procedures in curricular subject offerings (e.g. Chemistry, History, Economics etc.), whereas there is need for a thorough understanding of pupils optimally when faced with real life problems. Knowledge and understanding of didactic procedures are not adequate to solve these problems. Thus, exposure to Guidance and Counselling would prove very useful. To be able to acquire competence in resolving students' concerns, teachers need exposure to and experience in Guidance and Counselling. It can thus be stated that Guidance and Counselling is a vital resource for all teachers and would-be teachers alike. No other professional person working with children spends considerable time with them as do teachers. This means that the teacher's impact on the child is tremendous. Teachers, therefore, become responsible for shaping the attitudes, interests and behavioural dispositions of pupils in their classrooms.

At present, the curriculum of teacher education programmes in Colleges of Education and Nigerian universities is based on the following components:

- (i) General Studies – this includes the basic subjects
- (ii) Foundation Studies – which basically comprise courses in principles and practice of education
- (iii) Studies relating to the student's intended field of teaching and
- (iv) Teaching Practice.

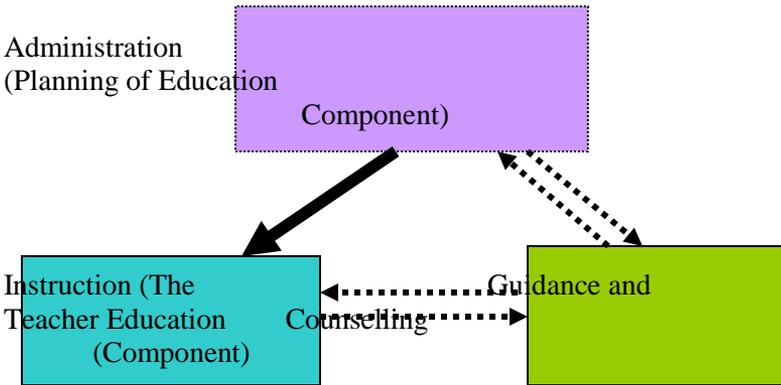
These components are those which are broken down into units of courses that extend over three years of study leading to the award of Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) or four years leading to the award of Bachelor's degree in Education. Essentially, all the courses taught at these levels of teacher education are cognitive in content. Since the affective

component is conspicuously missing in our teacher education curricula, it is the contention of this lecturer, Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, that any viable teacher education programme should include courses in guidance and counselling to make up for the loss. This lecturer has suggested that the Bachelor of Education programme be made intensive and comprehensive to accommodate guidance and counselling courses. An outline of this suggestion can be found in Idowu (1986).

### **RAISING THE BAR: Counselling and the National Policy on Education**

The first official policy document which made direct reference to school guidance and counselling in Nigeria was the 1981 version of the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria - FRN, 1981). In the document, the Government endorsed its total commitment and support for the counselling movement. That version has since undergone a number of revisions with the latest one published in the year 2004. In this version, Guidance and Counselling has been placed as a sub-section of educational services. Government, in this sub-section on educational services, indicated that "educational services facilitate the implementation of educational policy, the attainment of policy goals and the promotion of effectiveness of educational system" (NPE, 2004, p.51). The trouble with the poor performance of the guidance and counselling component sub-sector in the National Policy on Education (NPE) and its developmental strangulation is probably attributable to its being lumped under the educational services sub-sector. As earlier noted, guidance and counselling is a process of planned intervention within a school system by which the total development of students is stimulated in areas relating to their personal, social, career, emotional and academic concerns. It is an integral part of the educational process (Idowu, 2004); as such, it constitutes the third main force of education along with instruction and administration. Both instruction (the Teacher Education Component) and

administration (the Administration and Planning of Education Component) have been given a place of pride in the current policy.



This is not the case with Guidance and Counselling. Why should this be the case? Mr. Vice-chancellor Sir, I wish to point out that teachers are the main trustees of the instructional processes in schools, inculcating in students the subject matter, providing the environment in which knowledge can be accumulated and the preservation of our cultural heritage. Principals, on the other hand, are the main trustees of the administrative processes in schools and by this they ensure that schools are well managed. They (principals) oversee the well-being of the entire school system whose components are persons, the physical plant, processes and products. The main trustees of the individuality of the learners in schools are guidance counsellors whose place has been relegated in the document. According to the various curriculum- roles in schools, teachers are responsible for the cognitive and objective curriculum while guidance counsellors and members of the guidance team are responsible for the affective and subjective curriculum. Administrators take charge of the coordination of both aspects. True as this is, it should be expected that guidance and

counselling would play more than the ‘ancillary’ role it presently enjoys in the National Policy on Education. Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, this lecturer contends that it is only when all the three parts of the educational process are fully meshed that both the individual and society can reap the full benefits of the contribution of education towards the realisation of the country's educational objectives.

The contributions of guidance and counselling services to educational development and other issues which have guidance and counselling implications are scattered all over the document; about 21 items spanning through Sections I to I3 of the Policy (see Idowu, 1990c). Mr. Vice-chancellor Sir, this lecturer contends that putting all these concretely into one section will give it prominence and focus.

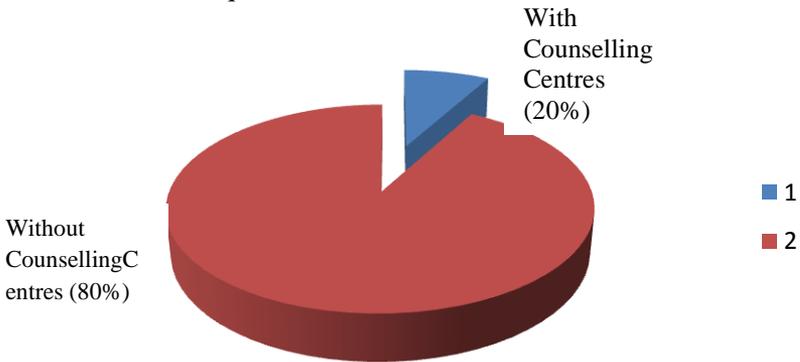
As Guidance and Counselling has not received a prominent place in the National Policy on Education, it is no surprise that guidance counsellors, if and when they are employed in schools, are used for various extra-guidance activities including: issuance of certificates to students, drawing time-tables, acting as substitute teachers, acting as school disciplinarians, completing report cards or assisting generally in the principal's office. This should not be so.

What then can be done about this? Guidance and counselling should be cast in a new light of prominence like Teacher Education and Administration by devoting a whole section to it and portraying it as an integral part of the school system, especially for the 6-3-3-4 educational system,- An outline of what is suggested for this section has been articulated by Idowu (1990c).

### **Raising the Bar: Establishment of CounsellingCentres in Universities**

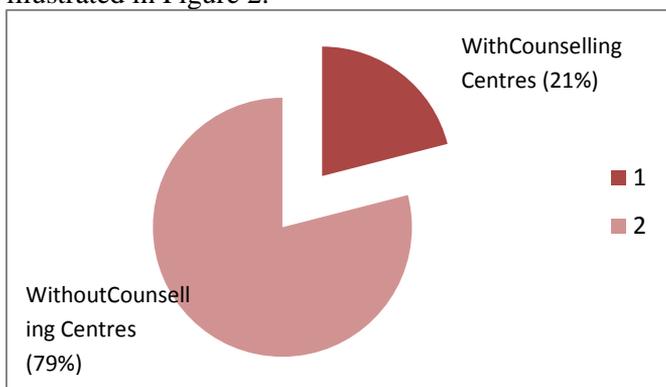
The Federal Government had once issued an order to all universities to set up independent counsellingcentres on their campuses. The immediate past Minister of Education, Professor Ruqayyatu Ahmed Rufa’i gave the directive at the formal

presentation of benchmark statements on “Student Support Services and Facilities and Guidelines for Counselling and Human Development Centres in Nigerian Universities” in Abuja. According to the Honourable Minister, the practice of providing counselling centres through the education faculty should stop as they were not being given their required place in the university system. The Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission (NUC), Professor Julius Okojie, said the documents were produced to ensure that universities provide the psychological, behavioural and other learning support services for students. The question now is: How many universities in Nigeria have fully-equipped, functional Counselling Centres as directed by the National Universities Commission? Figures 1 to 3 provide answers to this question.



**Figure 1:** Pie Chart Showing Percentage Distribution of Federal Universities in Nigeria with Counselling and Human Development Centres (CHDC)

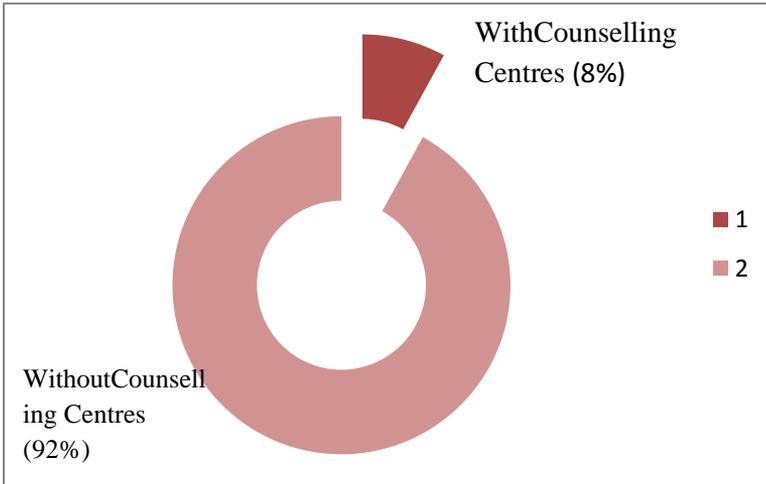
Figure 1 shows the percentage distribution of Federal Universities in Nigeria with Counselling Centres. As at January, 2014, this lecturer conducted a survey of Nigeria's forty (40) Federal Universities. Out of this number, only 8, representing 20% of the universities have fully equipped and functional Counselling Centres. It is quite heartening to mention here that our **better by far** University of Ilorin is part of this eight (8). Another survey report shows that many state universities are without Counselling and Human Development Centres. This is illustrated in Figure 2.



**Figure 2:** Pie Charting Showing Percentage Distribution of State Universities in Nigeria with Counselling and Human Development Centres (CHDC).

Figure 2 shows the percentage distribution of State Universities in Nigeria with Counselling Centres. A survey carried out by this lecturer in January, 2014, shows that of the thirty-eight (38) state universities, only 8 representing 21% of the Universities

have CounsellingCentres. Again, this figure is abysmally poor. Private universities were not left out in this survey as shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3:** A Chart Showing Percentage Distribution of Private Universities in Nigeria with Counselling and Human Development Centres (CHDC).

The situation is even the worst in private universities. Figure 3 shows that out of the 50 private universities surveyed as at January, 2014, only 4 representing 8% of the universities have fully-equipped Counselling and Human Development Centres. The story is not different in other tertiary institutions - Colleges of Education and Polytechnics.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, need I belabour the point that the bar must be raised in this direction? This lecture therefore serves as a wakeup call to all concerned to ensure that this vital aspect of the educational process is re-tooled and re-engineered to meet the needs of individual students at the tertiary level.

## **RAISING THE BAR: Counselling and Counsellors' Mandate**

I will not bore you with a discussion of the benefits of Guidance and Counselling in today's world. But in a discourse like this, we lose nothing by refreshing our memories on the subject. It is erroneously believed by some people that counsellors' responsibilities end in institutions of learning. However, developments in different aspects of life have made guidance and counselling services essential in all spheres of human endeavour. Counsellors work in diverse community settings designed to provide a variety of counselling, rehabilitation and support services. Their duties vary greatly, depending on their specialty, which is determined by the setting in which they work and the population they serve (Idowu, 1989b; 1995a). Although the specific setting may have an implied scope of practice, counsellors frequently are challenged with children and adolescents (Idowu & Dere, 1983; Esere & Idowu, 2010), adults, or families that have multiple issues, such as mental health issues (Idowu, 1985a; Idowu, 1992) addiction (Idowu & Alao, 1986; Idowu, 1987; Idowu, 1993a; Idowu, 1993b; Idowu & Abolarin, 1996), adolescents' sexual health issues (Esere & Idowu, 2010), intimate partner rape and violence (Esere, Idowu, Durosaro & Omotosho, 2009); marital stress and adjustment (Yahaya & Idowu, 1996; 1998; Dada & Idowu, 2004); disability (Idowu, 1988b; Idowu, 1991b; Idowu & Esere, 2011), employment and work-related issues (Idowu, 1989a; Idowu, 1984; Esere, Fakokunde & Idowu, 2013), school problems (Idowu, 1988a; Idowu, 1995; Idowu, Durosaro & Esere, 2010), pre-retirement anxiety and career counselling issues (Idowu, 1985c; 1986a; Dada & Idowu, 2004; Dada & Idowu, 2005; Omotosho, Idowu, Esere & Arewah, 2009), prisoners'-related issues and adjustment to life after prison (Agali & Idowu, 2006), drug use and abuse (Idowu, 1993a; 1993b). Counsellors must recognize these issues in order

to provide their clients with appropriate counselling services and support.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, I hasten to present in a summary form some of the many benefits of guidance and counselling to humanity in such areas as:

- *in regular Schools and Colleges* (Idowu, 1985b; Idowu, 1985c; Idowu, 1985d; Idowu, 1993c; Idowu&Abolarin, 1993; Idowu&Yahaya, 1993; Idowu, 1995a; Idowu 1995b; Idowu, 2000; Idowu, 2004; Idowu&Esere, 2009; Esere&Idowu, 2011)
- *in Special Schools* (Idowu, 1987; Idowu, 1988b; Idowu, 1991b; Idowu&Esere, 2011)
- *in Marriage and Family Settings* (Mowaiye-Fagbemi&Idowu, 1997; Esere&Idowu, 2000; Esere, Idowu&Omotosho, 2009; Esere, Omotosho&Idowu, 2011)
- *in the Banking Industry* (Yahaya, Opekun&Idowu, 1996)
- *in Drug Abuse and other related settings etc.* (Idowu&Abolarin, 1996; Idowu&Yahaya, 2006; Idowu, Durosaro&Esere, 2010)

## 1. **In Schools and Colleges**

In practice, guidance and counselling is needed in various segments of the education sector. It is to this end that the Federal Ministry of Education, in conjunction with the Counselling Association of Nigeria came up with a “Blueprint on Guidance and Counselling for Educational Institutions in Nigeria” (2000). This blueprint is a guide, a working document, sequentially structured to reflect the counselling needs of students and clients at different educational levels from pre-primary through secondary to tertiary institutions. To the glory of God, this lecturer served as a member of the editorial team that worked to produce the blueprint. The blueprint, according to the then Honourable Minister of Education, Prof.

TundeAdeniran, is aimed at affording a common focus or a reference point for the practitioners by providing them a broad spectrum from which they can draw inspirations.

The blueprint delineated the importance of guidance and counselling at the pre-primary, primary, junior and secondary as well as tertiary institutions of learning. Guidance and counselling for special needs-people as well as for adult and non-formal education was also highlighted. Despite the proliferation of documents like this, the practice of guidance and counselling at these levels of education is still very poor and in most cases non-existent. For instance, at the pre-primary/primary levels, Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, this lecturer is yet to see a school with guidance counsellors dedicated to the total personality development of the pre-primary/primary pupils.

The provision of Guidance and Counselling services in the junior and senior schools is geared towards helping students to understand self and to take appropriate steps in making educational, vocational, social and psychological life-long decisions. To this end, it is mandatory to help students gain adequate knowledge and understanding about the skills, attitudes and values that they must imbibe in order to live comfortably in the ever-changing world of ours today. At the junior and senior secondary school levels, some of the objectives of Guidance and Counselling, as spelt out in the Blueprint on Guidance and Counselling for Educational Institutions in Nigeria, are to, among others:

- equip the students with the skills of making appropriate and satisfying choices;
- enable the students develop positive self-image;
- assist teachers, other school staff members and parents in understanding the needs and problems of each student;
- equip students with problem-solving and decision-making skills;
- help students cope with examination anxiety etc.

## 2. **In Special Schools**

The need to accommodate the increasing number of persons with disability who perform well in entrance examinations into our secondary schools and the desire to provide services that will enhance their proper integration and adjustment call for the provision of highly specialised counselling services in our schools. Governments all over the world, worried by budget deficits, debt repayment and unemployment have largely ignored the needs of millions of people with special needs.

In human terms, the problem is one of suffering and misery, for dependent and insecure as most of them are, many people with special needs feel like third class citizens. The predicament of persons with disability is particularly grave in developing countries where facilities for the special needs people are woefully inadequate or non-existent. Idowu (1991) noted that a feasible approach to tackling the problems of people with disability lies in giving them functional education; in other words, education that will train them to meet both societal and unique needs. This stance finds collaboration in the declaration of the “Rights of Persons with Disability” adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1975 which stated that “persons with disability have the right to education which will enable them to develop their capacities and skills and which will hasten the process of their social integration” (p.23). The notion of “Right to Education” of 1975 led to the “Democratisation of Education”, the objective of which focuses on ensuring that everybody without exception has an opportunity to exercise his/her right to education. It is this right to education that has been termed the “principles of zero exclusion without discrimination or prejudice”.

A pertinent question to ask at this juncture, Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, is: What special counselling provisions have been made to take care of students with disability in our school

system? Idowu, (1988b) made a case for the provision of special counselling services for visually impaired citizens in Nigeria. This call is further reiterated in this lecture, not just for the visually impaired, but for all special needs people (see Idowu, 1991b). It will not be far from logical reasoning to assume that a helping service like Counselling will give more focus to special needs people than to “normal” people. This being the case, how come that in the only paragraph (Paragraph j, No. 101, Section 11) where guidance and counselling is specifically mentioned in the National Policy on Education (2004), no reference is made to people with disability? As noted elsewhere (Idowu, 1991), this lecturer will not attempt to proffer reasons for government. At best, it is logical to assume that it was an omission.

It should be noted that for such counselling service to be effective with people with disability, it must transcend the realm of the usual verbal interaction between counsellor and clients. It must include elements of teaching, training and re-training, advising, consultation and even environmental manipulation such as may involve extensive work with many persons in addition to the person with the disability. The counsellor who is skilled in providing these services tagged the Rehabilitation Counsellor (Idowu, 1988b) therefore has duties that go a step beyond the usual counselling duties. Does this mean that the rehabilitation counsellor will have to be specially trained and employed in schools? The answer is No. Any professionally trained guidance counsellor can function as a rehabilitation counsellor although it is expected that such a professional would have been duly exposed in his/her training programme to course offerings and practicum in learning disabilities and learning problems, behaviour modification, rehabilitation counselling, education of disadvantaged and exceptional children and abnormal psychology, among others. A number of factors have been found to be at the root of the problems that require rehabilitation of people with disability and these include accidents, congenital defects, maladjustment of social origin etc.

All these factors should be thoroughly examined when working with individual students with disability (Idowu, 1999b).

### **3. In Marriage and Family Settings**

Couples' counselling, previously known as marital therapy or marriage guidance, addresses the problems arising from adult sexual or intimate relationships. A relationship like marriage is based on intimacy and trust. When it stops working, we are deeply affected and our health and happiness suffer. Our sense of identity and self-worth often rests on the strength of our relationships and we can despair when our prime relationship fails.

The role of a family counsellor is an extremely important one in today's society. There are many individuals who have issues that need to be resolved yet are unable to do so on their own in an effective manner. This is where family counsellors enter the picture. These individuals help others when they need to work out issues and need an unbiased individual to help them to do so.

Marriage and family counsellors help individuals, couples and families understand and enhance relationships, resolve emotional issues from broken and impaired relationships, and enhance personal well-being. They work collaboratively with clients to enhance clients' strengths, resources and resilience, and develop clearer relationship goals for the future. Relationships need solid foundations; two unhappy people with unresolved issues rarely make a long-term happy relationship (Esere&Idowu, 2000).

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, I make bold to say that families are only as healthy as the couple. Children are only as healthy as their family, and a family is only as healthy as the couple, and couples are only as healthy as each individual. The way that an individual has developed his/her pattern of thought, expectations, life, and relationship skills, affect the overall health of his/her marriage (Esere&Idowu, 2000). Couples come together with

different past experiences, beliefs, and behaviour. Effective marriage counselling provides lasting solutions, considers the root system that created the presenting problems, and heals the marriage from the roots up. When one receives marriage counselling, he/she will gain a road map and a check list to identify what healthy and also destructive behaviour in marriage looks like. He/she will learn tools and develop skills to navigate through his/her challenges and overcome. Some of my humble contributions in this area have centred on how counselling can help:

- recognise and address destructive patterns of relating (Dada & Idowu, 2006)
- learn new relationship skills in marriage (Esere, Idowu & Omotosho, 2009)
- strengthen couples' relationships and assist them to be more successful (Esere & Idowu, 2000)
- acknowledge and proffer legislation against abusive relationships and domestic violence (Mowaiye-Fagbemi & Idowu, 1997; Esere, Idowu, Durosaro & Omotosho, 2009)
- delineate and address factors predisposing communication breakdown among couples (Esere, Idowu & Onuegbu, 2012).

In times of stress and difficulty, the home becomes very important to the individual's sense of well-being. Individuals look to the home to provide a sensory reprieve that allows them to unplug from the stresses of the outside world. In turbulent times, people yearn for a serene environment. However, creating a calming, peaceful home is not as easy as it seems. This is because the elements of a peaceful environment are not always obvious (Esere & Idowu, 2000). Marriage is a complex interpersonal relationship. Thus, its breakdown generally arises from a variety of causes. One of the most prevalent underlying factors in the breakdown of a marriage is lack of communication. It is in recognition of this fact that we (Esere, Idowu & Onuegbu,

2012) carried out a study on factors predisposing communication breakdown among married adults in Malete, Kwara State. Effective communication is a basic building block for strong families. Despite the crucial position effective communication occupies in the marital relationship, there are barriers that impede it. Couples desiring to have effective communication must be able to identify and overcome these barriers. This was the aim of the study.

The findings of this study led to the following recommendations:

- Massive and intensive campaign should be mounted in Malete to advocate pre marital counselling in order to equip intending couples with effective communication skills.
- Marital counselling clinics should be set up in Malete as this would go a long way in availing married couples the services of professional counsellors. This could be done as part of the University's community service outreach programme.
- As fast as the rate of divorce and separation is rising, the output of books on marriage and family counselling should also be rising, even faster. Thus, the preparation and sale of books written specifically for married couples was advocated.

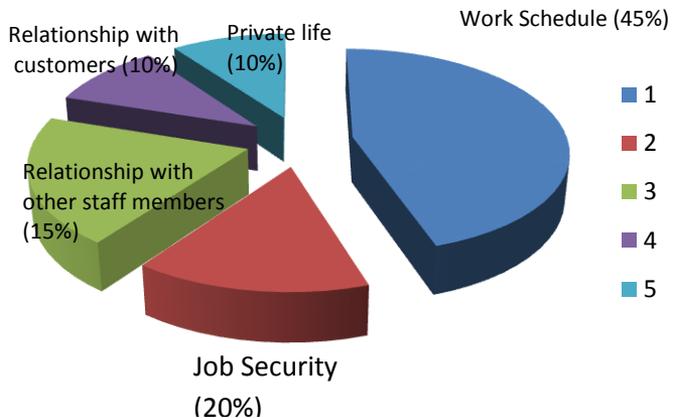
Considering the immense role counsellors can play in marriage and family setting, Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, I maintain that the bar must be raised as **professional marriage and family counselling** in Nigeria for now is practically non-existent and this should not be.

## 1. In the Banking Industry

As earlier indicated, Guidance and Counselling is not limited to the school setting. Guidance and Counselling finds relevance in all sectors of human endeavour. One of such sectors is the banking industry. The economic depression which Nigeria is facing has forced many banks into financial crisis and

liquidation. Many bank staff are under pressure as a result of the unpredictable economic circumstances. Their jobs are not only threatened, they also face problems of work overload, robbery attacks, hired assassins, hyper-inflation, poor remuneration etc. It is an incontestable fact that work is crucial to the survival and existence of man. It is therefore not an exaggeration to state that whatever happens in the banking industry affects the bank staff. Since some banks in Nigeria face depression, it can be said that many bank workers face stress. It is to this end that we (Yahaya, Opekun&Idowu, 1996) carried out a study on “*Sources of Stress and Coping Strategies among Employees in Selected Banks in Nigeria*”. Considering the adverse effects of stress on employees and on organisations, our study was aimed at calling the attention of stakeholders in the banking industries to the need for industrial counselling.

The summary of the results showed that sources of stress among bank employees were clustered into five areas: work schedule (45%), relationship with other staff members (15%), job security (20%), private life (10%) and relationship with customers (10%).



**Figure 4:** Pie chart showing sources of stress among bank employees.

The coping strategies employed by the workers vary from combative to preventive. Some of the combative coping strategies were found to be destructive. For instance, 60% of the respondents agreed to the statement that most of the times they use drugs and tranquilisers to cope with stress.

Toward this end, the study recommended the establishment of counselling units in the banking industry and all other related industries. This is predicated on the fact that counsellors could assist in promoting responsible attitudes toward the maintenance of good health through enlightenment and re-education. Bank workers could be made aware of the life styles that are stress prone, ways of developing rational thinking, helping them to understand ways by which they contribute to stress and how it can be overcome or avoided.

In short, the bar must be raised as far as counselling in the banking industry is concerned. The banking industry and indeed all other industries in Nigeria must have counselling units to address the issue of stress in the sectors to ensure effective job performance and enhance the health of its employees. Of course, doing this will have a positive multiplier effect on the overall development of the sector and indeed Nigeria in general.

## **2. Remediating anti-social behaviour of Adolescents and Young Adults**

The increasing incidence of smoking and drug abuse among adolescent students seems to be a contributory factor to the frequent ugly confrontation between school administrators and students. It is a known fact, Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, that students who smoke or use drugs shed all inhibitions and produce behaviour that are inconsistent with school discipline. As part of my contribution in finding solutions to drug use among youths, I, carried out a study aimed at determining the extent of smoking and drug use among secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis (Idowu, 1987). It was carried out

with the hope of examining what role(s) guidance counsellors can play in modifying such maladaptive habits.

The results showed that influence of friends/peers, TV and radio advertisements, and parents, in descending order of magnitude were the main sources through which students acquired their smoking habit. Teachers and relations were the least sources of acquisition of smoking habit to this sample of students. Alcohol, sleepless tablets, Librium, reactivan and valium, in a descending order, were the drugs most used by students. As to reasons why students used drugs, 24.58% indicated that they used drugs to stay awake, 15.83% used drugs to relax while 15.00% acquired boldness through drug use and 14.58% used drugs because their friends used them. The reason least given for use of drugs (5.17%) was for pleasure.

Results of the study revealed that students were willing to have information concerning the inhibitory effects of smoking and drug use. Students' preference for parents and teachers in the handling of smoking and drug problems may be due to their unawareness of who a counsellor is and what role he/she performs. That the study found that few schools had counsellors seems to confirm this position. It is thus appropriate as the majority of the students indicated that more counsellors would be needed in the schools to make an impact.

Since it is concluded from this study that students would like to have more counsellors in their schools, it is thus imperative that more counsellors be trained to meet these needs. The Kwara State Ministry of Education and the Kwara State Schools Management Board in particular and other State Ministries of Education and their Schools Management Boards in general should strive to post counsellors to their secondary schools. Posting counsellors to schools can help in minimising students' smoking habit and drug abuse since counsellors have been known to help counsellees in achieving adaptive attitude, insight and behaviour (Ipaye, 1983; Idowu, 1993a; Adelekan, Makanjuola, Ndom, Fayeye, Adegoke, Amusan&Idowu, 2001;

Idowu, 2004); Trained counsellors can do these through a careful synthesis and application of some relevant techniques.

### **RAISING THE BAR: Challenges and the Way Forward**

Guidance and Counselling, as an educational service and academic discipline has received much more public attention in Nigeria than any other field of education in the last three to four decades. Speeches have been made by various public officers in education, educationists and private individuals alike, and all have addressed the need to revamp Nigeria's educational system with a more productive and functional type that incorporates guidance and counselling. In that landmark address delivered at the 1976 launching ceremony of the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CAN), Colonel (Dr.) AhmaduAlli (Rtd), then Federal Commissioner of Education, stated, *inter alia*:

Guidance and counselling is an educational innovation that enjoys my full support. Any educational system will be deficient without educational guidance. Our students' need to be helped by personal counselling, career education and vocational guidance to discover their talents, aptitudes and to make intelligent career decisions.(pp. 1-2).

In an opening address delivered at the National Workshop on Transition from Junior to Senior Secondary School, held at the University of Ilorin on June 7<sup>th</sup>, 1988, the then Honourable Minister of Education, Professor JibrilAminu noted:

My Ministry as well as all the State Ministries of Education are aware of the heavy reliance placed on guidance and counselling for most aspects of the new 6-3-3-4 system to actually succeed... My Ministry therefore attaches great importance to guidance and counselling and is determined to staff all secondary schools with counsellors as soon as possible. For these reasons, my Ministry is actively encouraging the production of counsellors in such a number that will meet the... to employ as many trained counsellors as could be found on

the market now. I do know that the economy is not buoyant but we are determined to employ and place in schools as many counsellors as we can afford. (pp. 2-8)

Much as government seems to have tried her best for counselling, many issues of a professional nature are still being debated. For example, what is (or should be) the status of counsellors in schools? Should practising counsellors be certified and licensed? What body should be responsible for such certification and licensure? These, in the opinion of this lecturer, should be issues that should be addressed to match government's positive posture toward the discipline. The lecturer now attempts to examine some of these issues.

Firstly, the status of counsellors in schools. The National Council on Education (NCE), being the highest policy making body on educational matters, commissioned a task force in 1988 to study and report on some vital issues related to guidance and counselling in Nigeria. After series of meetings, the task force submitted its report to NCE. On the status of counsellors in school, the task force recommended that counsellors should be allowed to practise on full time basis and that because of their impact status, counsellors should be structured on a career ladder different from that of other school staff. This seems to be a major policy thrust for counsellor practice. But this policy statement, I make bold to state, has not been implemented to date.

Secondly, should counsellors be certified and licensed for practice? It is widely acknowledged that for a body of skilled people to be recognised, there is the need for such individuals to be specially trained and certified. It is always assumed that the body would have an ethical committee that plays a regulatory role for practitioners through licensure. The Counselling Association of Nigeria (CAN then, now CASSON) endorsed this requirement and at its 1988 Conference held in Maiduguri, set up a Certification and Licensure Board (CALB) to, among other

functions, recommend to the Association, policy guidelines for member certification and licensure.

Efforts have been made in this direction by the Association. However, for the Certificate and Licence to be a “legal tender” as it were, the existence of the Association itself needs to be backed by an Act of the National Assembly. This lecturer is aware of some efforts that have been made in this direction. This is, thus a wakeup call on the Executive Committee of CASSON to strive harder to get the needed legislation passed at the National Assembly. This step, if achieved, will be a major milestone in the annals of the Association.

Also, as a way of controlling the quality of counsellors produced in our various higher institutions, a list of courses that serve as the basic minimum required for training has been prepared by the National Universities Commission (NUC). A critical look at the courses shows that aspects of career development, testing, behaviour modification, techniques of individual and group counselling, principles of inter-personal relationship, and practicum were included.

With this development, it is easy to assume that any product of a recognised and accredited Guidance and Counselling programme in Nigeria would have been exposed to these courses.

### **Funding Issue**

In spite of the official recognition of guidance and counselling in the National Policy on Education, much is still expected in financing guidance and counselling programmes. The effective and efficient implementation of the school guidance programme in Nigeria will remain a mirage without a proper and well articulated funding policy. With funds, much is achieved and the goals set are easily attained. Most of the facilities needed and activities carried out in guidance work need funds for implementation.

For the smooth operation of guidance and counselling services in our schools, basic tools and resources need to be provided. These include personnel, physical infrastructure, equipment and materials. Therefore, the ingredients for funding, as specified in the *Blueprint on Guidance and Counselling for Educational Institutions in Nigeria* should be implemented to promote training of personnel and provide adequate infrastructure, support services and working tools.

In view of the importance of guidance and counselling and to prevent educational wastage, Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, each tier of government (Local, State and Federal) should set aside a specific percentage of its annual education budget for guidance and counselling activities.

### **Attitudinal Challenges**

Schools in Nigeria have been bedevilled by a lot of misconceptions and sheer ignorance of its role on the part of policy makers and administrators. A cursory look at many primary/secondary schools, apart from Federal Government Colleges, shows unavailability of full time school counsellors. This trend is in direct contrast to the Federal Government's directives. In the National Policy on Education, it was categorically stated that all schools should have practicing counsellors. But what one observes is that where there are school counsellors, they are not even allowed to practice on full-time basis. Most school counsellors are used as professional subject teachers with little or no time for practice. This attitude also negates the recommendation of the National Council on Education, which gives recognition to guidance counsellors as full-time professionals in schools. It is the thinking of most school principals that there is nothing special in guidance and counselling that any experienced teacher cannot do. This behavioural inclination towards counselling is quite limiting.

## **Recommendations**

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, esteemed invited guests, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I have attempted in this lecture to review basic concepts and terms in Guidance and Counselling, thus setting the background for highlighting the roles and functions counsellors have to play in practice. A case has been made for the recognition of the discipline and the need for it to be accorded a more prominent place in our educational system. It is an incontestable fact that counsellors are highly needed in all facets of our educational institutions and even beyond. To be able to achieve its objectives and fulfil its mandate of service delivery, the bar of Guidance and Counselling has to be raised. The following are hereby recommended for implementation:

1. **Government:** Given the pronouncements of Honourable Ministers of Education at various times on the support for and commitment to the training of more counsellors for schools and colleges, it is imperative for:

- (a) concrete steps and actions to be taken to boost the training of counsellors in our universities. Assistance, through funding and other resources, should be given to some selected universities across the six (6) geo-political zones to mount specially designed training programmes for counsellors;
- (b) In-service training should be offered to interested teachers to pursue courses in Counselling;
- (c) Federal and state governments should employ and post trained counsellors to all schools and they should be allowed to practice on full-time basis;
- (d) Career masters/mistresses are useful para-professionals in the guidance programme. Universities should be encouraged to mount programmes for these personnel, using the training manual produced by the Federal Ministry of Education (FME). On no account, however,

should career masters/mistresses be made to function as counsellors;

- (e) Government in the next review of the National Policy on Education (NPE) should devote a whole section to Counselling. The contents of such a section has been articulated by Idowu (1990c);
  - (f) Government should immediately set up the National Guidance Council to work with CASSON in the professionalization of Counselling;
  - (g) A division should be created in the Federal Ministry of Education to organise and coordinate all guidance and counselling activities in our educational system. The division should be headed by a trained professional. State Ministries of Education should follow suit; and
  - (h) Federal and State Ministries of Education should allocate a portion of their annual budget to the implementation of counselling services.
2. **Schools and Colleges:** These institutions make the most use of the services of counsellors; thus:
- (a) they should absorb all trained counsellors and allow them to practice full time. They should strive to attain the ratio of one (1) counsellor to five hundred (500) students;
  - (b) they should set up a functional guidance team with the counsellor as the head; other members of the team could include psychologists, nurses, house masters/mistresses, physical and health educators etc; and
  - (c) principals should set aside some funds in their schools to cater for the procurement of necessary counselling tools/tests and for other logistic needs.
3. **Universities (and other tertiary Institutions):** Universities serve as the home for the production of high level manpower needed for the delivery of counselling services; thus:

- (a) all conventional universities should be encouraged to mount programmes in guidance and counselling to meet the need for a large number of professionals in schools;
  - (b) Faculties of Education should offer at least four (4) courses as outlined in this paper to all teacher trainees. The courses should be taught by qualified Counsellor Educators;
  - (c) all Universities should be made to set up Counselling and Human Development Centres (CHDC) within a short time. The National Universities Commission (NUC) should not give full Institutional Accreditation to Universities that do not have such centres;
  - (d) Polytechnics and Colleges of Education, through their supervisory agencies (i.e. NBTE and NCCE), should also be directed to set up such centres in their institutions.
4. **Out-of-School Setting:** It has been pointed out in this lecture that counselling goes beyond the school setting;thus:
- (a) Organizations and agencies such as banks, industries, hospitals, social welfare centres, ministries, government parastatalsetc should establish counselling units, manned by professional counsellors to cater for the social, emotional and career needs of the workers;
  - (b) Remand homes and prisons should offer correctional/rehabilitation counselling services for inmates.
5. **Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON):** The Association has come a long way and a lot of developmental initiatives have been put in place. More work still needs to be done; thus:
- (a) National and State Executive Committees of CASSON should work more closely with the Federal and State Ministries of Education for synergy. Joint programmes should be organised from time to time;

- (b) CASSON activities should be more visible at the state and national levels. Sensitization and enlightenment programmes should be organized through the print and electronic media. All states should be made to have fully functioning chapters, as only a few state chapters are visible;
- (c) there is an urgent and pressing need to pursue legislation at the National Assembly, especially for certification and licensure purposes. Efforts at lobbying and networking should be vigorously pursued.

### **Conclusion**

This lecture has highlighted counselling in Nigeria, the journey so far, challenges and the way forward. In spite of the efforts made by various tiers of government in ensuring that guidance and counselling is entrenched in our educational system, the issue is still far from being resolved. This is because the attempts/efforts have not been in proportion to the magnitude of the problem.

Studies, researches and publications of this lecturer in his thirty-five years of service in the University, have addressed the issues of Counselling and Counsellor Education and proposed ways of raising the bar. This lecturer has endeavoured in his lectures and training to sensitize and prepare new generations of counsellor educators to appreciate the challenges associated with the counselling profession and the way forward.

The dangers of non-implementation of policy statements regarding guidance and counselling in Nigerian schools are now well-known and the proposed solutions to the problem have been clearly articulated. What is lacking, in my humble opinion, is the national consciousness, the national consensus and the political will to address the problems appropriately. The correlation between counselling and manpower development is no longer in dispute. An illiterate society will always be a

poverty-stricken society. In this day and age, we know that no literate society is classified as underdeveloped, just as no illiterate society is classified as developed because development is a factor of creative and productive human mind which cannot flower and blossom without proper guidance and counselling. Therefore, unless the issue of counselling is adequately and appropriately dealt with, there is the danger that Nigeria will, for long, continue to be a nation of unrealized hopes and unfulfilled promises. My hope and prayer is that this will not be the lot of our nation. On this note, may I, Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, enjoin all counsellors to rise to the occasion in **raising the bar** and ensuring that counselling is entrenched in all facets of human endeavour.

### **Acknowledgements**

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, kindly permit me to end this lecture with some words of appreciation and thanksgiving to some fellow humans who made God visible to me in this life and helped to describe the path that led me to my present status. I thank God for inspiring these people and for giving them the wisdom and heart that performed the miracle of my life:

- My late parents, Mr. Isaac Adetunji and Mrs. LilianKehindeIdowu who did not enjoy much formal education but believed in it. They spared nothing to see that my sisters and I received the best education and attained our childhood dreams. The families of my sisters are hereby acknowledged - Mr. Bisi and Late Mrs. IbiyinkaArowoogun, Mr. Sina and Rev. (Mrs.) IyaboSoyege, Mr. Adeola and Mrs. AdebisiOlufon and Mr. Ayo and Mrs. Adeola George. You have all been sources of encouragement to me.
- I appreciate the love and goodwill of late Chief D. O. A. Oguntoye of Imesi-Ile, my father-in-law and the entire family. The support of my in-laws: Prof. and Barrister

(Mrs.) P. O. Abiodun; Mr. & Mrs. Fela Amos (USA); Mr. & Mrs. SojiOguntoye (USA); and Mr. & Mrs. DimejiOduwole (USA) is duly acknowledged.

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- The Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) for providing me with opportunities for sharing of experiences through our Annual Conferences and also opportunities to respond to the myriad of problems and challenges facing guidance and counselling in Nigeria. I appreciate the commitment and hardwork of all past Presidents of the Association: Prof. OluMakinde (Founding); Late Prof. S. A. Gesinde; Prof. M. Para Mallum; Prof. (Mrs.) C. C. Achebe; Late Prof. C. G. M. Bakare; Dr. NsaAniNsa; Prof. Frank C. Carew; Prof. (Mrs.) O. C. Okobiah, Prof. I. A. Kolo as well as Prof. A. A. Adegoke (current). I must confess that I thoroughly enjoyed my four year stint (2000-2004) as President of the Association.
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