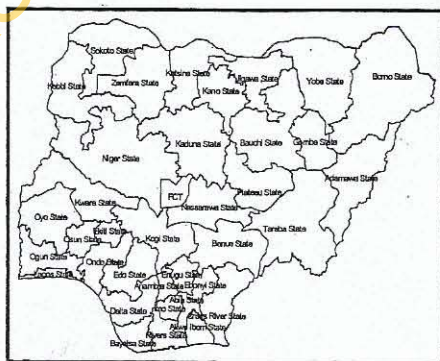


Adult Education in Nigeria

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FROM THE EDITORIAL SUITE

Whaoh! We have made it again !

The right to learn is an indispensable tool for the sustainable development of man anywhere he may be found. The right to education / learning is a fundamental one which should not be restricted to any group or class of individuals. Education for all should not be compromised but rather should be the concern of all.

This theme has been bothering mankind right from the primordial times. In fact the modern world does not neglect the issue. An attempt to make education reach every individual in whatever clime gave ripe to the power conference which called on countries of the world to implement the right to learn by creating enabling environment for the attainment of the right. It was sequel to the declaration of the right to education that the world leaders in the past seven years have adopted both Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) as the blue print for economic and social development of man. One may recall succinctly that the world declaration of EFA (Jontien, 1990 and Daker, 2000) was a major means of ensuring availability of access to education. In fact, looking at Article 1 of the declaration; meeting the basic needs one discovers that the present situation is a far cry from attaining the objectives which states that every person shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet learning needs. The gap is still wide!

On the home front, the Nigerian Government is unrelenting in her activities to meet eight MDSs, but the present assessment has not indicated yet that the MDGs shall be achieved by the stipulated times.

What then, are those things that needed to be done which have not be done? Are we in time with the spirit of making every individual access education anywhere they are? Are we providing

the opportunity for every individual to learn at their own pace and convenience? Or at the convenience of who?

Are the resources – human, material and financial fully available for the provision of functional and sustainable education to all? Is the governance really committed to provide education for the governed? What type of modes are we employing to reach all? And what are the methodologies at the delivery points of providing education for all. These are some of the salient questions besetting the minds of our scholars and other stakeholders who contributed to this edition. Even so, they were worried about the marginalized, the unreached in all terrains, the drop-outs, the disabled, the handicapped, deprived or those pushed out of receiving education, one way or the other, in getting access to education. It was in an attempt to proffer plausible solutions to the problem that brought about this edition. The responses of our writers are diverse. Most have thrown challenges, made suggestions and recommendations while others have analysed and exrayed the right path to actualizing the dream – to widen opportunity to education for all. Whether we like it or not, the truth is indisputable that if we fail to provide wider opportunities for adults to learn, we are mortgaging not only our future, but that of our offspring. God forbid! And that is why we commend this edition to all stakeholders in our educational system be it pre-primary, primary, secondary or the tertiary – that provision of education to everybody is the task for everybody, scholars, educationists, educators, policy makers, government and non governmental agencies would do their best to make everybody receive functional education. What about you! Think about it and contribute your quota to providing access to education to the next person to you! Happy reading.

Abiodun Okediran, Ph.D.

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SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE IN NIGERIA: AN EMPOWERING TOOL FOR MASS PARTICIPATION IN BASIC EDUCATION

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Abstract

The paper presents social work in the presents arrangement with the aim of re-examining and rediscovering Its purpose. This effort is being made to reposition social work in Nigeria so as to meet global standards, global challenges and best practices. Some definitions of social work are reviewed, highlighting major comparisons and contrasts. Core purpose and mission statements of social work in Nigeria are examined with particular reference to the Nigeria Association of Social Workers as the professional body, the academic/professional programme of the institution's training social workers and the welfare programme of federal, state and local government as the major employers of social workers in Nigeria.

A brief historical survey of social welfare in pre-colonial period was done to enable us know where we were coming from, how we arrived at the present state and consequently prepare for future challenges in social work in Nigeria. This author ,is observed that some African social values have been found dispensable in addressing modern social problems and the infusion of these values into the training of social workers in Nigerian cannot be

overemphasized. Thereafter, the strengths and limitations of the values are examined with the hope of building on the strengths and diminishing the weaknesses. Finally, the author suggested some steps to be taken by both government and the appropriate bodies in the rediscovering process while preparing to face future challenges.

Introduction

I quickly embraced the idea of becoming one of the pioneer academic Staff for the newly created social welfare unit in the Department of Adult Education, University of Ibadan in the 1990s which eventually metamorphosed into the Department of Social Work in the year 2001. But the issue of having to explain myself to people when a mention is made about my department kept recurring, even in the university community as people do not understand what social work is all about like they understood other professions of law, teaching, medicine, engineering and so on, it was then I realized that something had to be done about the development of this new profession in Nigeria, even though it had lasted in this part of the world since the beginning of time as an informal activity.

While all the major stakeholders were still graphing with the problem of establishing and popularizing the profession in Nigeria, I was invited by the Nigeria Association of Social Workers to deliver a paper on Repositioning and Rediscovering Social Work in Nigeria on their 30th Anniversary. This gave me an opportunity to actually express my feelings and opinions about social work in Nigeria. The point is that the challenge of rediscovering and repositioning will require collaboration by both professionals and academics and the government.

Be that as it may, one of the cardinal provisions of the Nigerian Constitution of 1979 is that "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government". It is not surprising therefore that the government of Nigeria could have such a noble ideal as such value was firmly rooted in the tradition and culture of our ancestors. What could be surprising is that in spite of the resources (both human and material) that government has at disposal, the Nigerian government have not been able to live up to

this ideal, rather a show of non-challant attitude is seen from both military and democratic regimes to the people they ought to care for.

One of the reasons for this attitude could be that the government has been grappling with some teething problems since independence, it is the belief of this author that the time is ripe for the government to work towards living up to the noble ideal.

As a matter of fact, the various reforms by the present Obasanjo administration are clearly attesting to the fact that government is making good effort to tree e.g. Public Service Reforms, Pension Reformers, Health Insurance Scheme, Education Reforms, Prison Reforms, Anation and Maritime Industry Reforms to mention but a few are timely interventions in the realization of that noble ideal provided for in the 1979 Constitution. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to look at our past examine the present and project the trend for the future as the emerging profession of social work works laboriously towards the realization provision of "security and welfare" for Nigerian citizenry at this time of their great need.

Social welfare has undergone considerable changes since its inception in the early 19th century. The changes thus makes it imperative for diverse definitions and so there appears to be so many definitions as there are textbooks on this subject. For the purpose of this paper, some definitions are examined:

- ◆ The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilizing theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work (International Definition of Social Work, 2001).
- ◆ NASOW defines social work as a helping profession that utilizes skills and theories of human behaviour and social systems in the alleviation or resolution of social problems affecting individuals, groups or communities (Proposed Bill to National Assembly by the Nigeria Assodation of Social Workers (NASOW))

Smalley (1967) defines social work as a body of knowledge, skill and ethics professionally employed in the administration of the social services and in the development of programmes for social welfare (Elizabeth Ruth Smalley, 1967).

Social work has been defined as being concerned with the interaction between people and their social environment which affect the ability of people to accomplish life tasks, alleviate distress and realize their aspirations and values. The purpose of social work therefore is to enhance the problem-solving and coping capacities of people; link people with systems that provide them with resources, services and opportunities; promote the effective and humane operation of these systems and contribute to the development and improvement of social policy (The West Virginia Undergraduate Social Work Curriculum Development Project, 1978).

Some comparisons

Body	Purpose	Theories	Target Population
IASSW/ IFSW	Social change liberation Problem solving Empowerment	Human behaviour Social systems	People
NASOW	Helping problem alleviate / resolve problems	Human behaviour Social systems	Individuals, groups, communities
Social Work Department	Social functioning in the force of obstacles and hindrances Help people to help themselves	Systemic Systematic Eclectivation	Students / governments and NGOs social workers; individuals, groups, communities.

The purpose of the come pension is to advance reasons why social workers trained in Nigeria could practice anywhere in the world considering the fact that social work is now a mobile profession and that globalization is now an important requirement in the education for social work. As a matter of fact, social work has been ranked among the top live professions in the world that will be In great demand in the next couple of decades (Internet).

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Purpose of Social Work

See Appendix 1.

After a careful identification of the core purposes, all Schools of Social Work are thereby enjoined to develop their own core purposes which should follow these specifications.

- ◆ Clearly articulated so that major stakeholders who have an investment in such a core purpose or mission understand it.
- ◆ Reflects the values and the ethical principles of social work.
- ◆ Reflects aspiration towards equity with regard to the demographic profile of the institution's locality. The core purpose or mission statement should thus incorporate such issues as ethnic and gender representation on the faculty, as well as in recruitment and addressing procedures for students.

Objectives of MSW Programme

The objectives of the programme is to produce highly skilled manpower for the public and private agencies in the following areas of social work in Nigeria.

1. Health (General and Psychiatry).
2. Social welfare (Family, Education, Youth, Juvenile and Criminal Justice).
3. Community Development.
4. Industrial Welfare.

Objectives of the Nigeria Institute of Social Work

There are 12 objectives of NISW which are listed in the proposed bill by NASoW. The first 2 objectives are stated here.

1. To promote professional practice of social work in Nigeria and to uphold social work values and practices.
2. To adjudicate in matters of professional practice and award necessary penalty to any offending member. Check Appendix II.

Social Welfare in Pre-Colonial Period

In the pre-colonial period, social welfare service were available in all the traditional societies which is now christened Nigeria through informal and non-formal arrangements. Some of those arrangements are still in place up till this time inspite of the establishment of formal bureaucratic structures. Examples are traditional charity, mutual assistance, communal care, wide inheritance, almsgiving, fostering and adoption, respect for elders, dispute resolutions and settlements, age grade systems, apprenticeship training, oral traditions through story telling and proverbs or philosophical sayings, communal child rearing practices, effective health care delivery system through traditional medicine and etc.

Families and the extended families lived together in family compounds i.e. example of communal living is the house address system that still exist in some towns and cities in Nigeria today. In Ibadan and Ogbomoso townships today there are house addresses as Otun's compound, Ebila's compound, Ile-Otun, He Ebila, etc., everyone was his brothers' keeper. There was respect for elders as age played a very important role in the society, in marriages, dispute settlements and checks and balances for the youth. There were no written laws, but oral tradition was used to pass down information/education from one generation to another. Charities and philanthropists provided relief for social casualties e.g. victims of natural disasters, orphans and care of the mentally sick in the society.

Community education was one major medium used to promote desirable behaviour among the youth. This was usually done through moonlight story telling by an elderly person who took care of children when everybody had gone 'we the farm or gone' to attend to other businesses. As a result of this arrangement, most of the social/family problems which linger these days were either non-existent or were promptly taken care of immediately it reared its head. Such problems like delinquent behaviour was taken care of by the elderly people or by the entire community. This was based on the belief that "you are your brother's keeper or it takes a village to raise a child". It was on these ideals that Christian and Islamic missionaries build on when they established schools and social services.

Things went on smoothly before the war years came in 1914 -1918 and 1934 - 1945 when the society was disorganized as many men were drafted into the army and many died in the process. As a result some of their children became delinquent, as mothers alone could not raise the children adequately. This situation brought in concerned men who formed a committee of voluntary social workers named the Green Triangle Club. They organized themselves and responded to the needs of these children through the establishment of a hostel accommodation for them which was called the Green Triangle Hostel at Yaba in Lagos.

Educational institutions, hospitals, homes/hostels and orphanages were established by church missionaries and other voluntary organisations to provide social services to the seeming population then. They were able to make worthwhile impact on the people through enhanced knowledge and creation of employment opportunities. Some of the institutions were later taken over by the government and or merged with Remand Home / Approved School under the Children and Young Person's Ordinance of 1943.

The Present Arrangement of Social Welfare in Nigeria

Three federal ministries which are: The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, Federal Ministry of Youth and Inter-governmental Relations and the Federal Ministry of Sports and Social Development all located at Abuja are responsible for the -provision of social services at the federal level for the whole country. It is through the federal ministry that government's social policies are formulated and funds for social services in all the states are provided. Each of the state organizes and plans its social services through its own Ministry of Women Affairs, Community Development and Social Welfare. For some years now, there has not been consistency in the naming of the agency that provides, welfare services to the people; other governments merged Youth Development Sports and Cultural Affairs with Social Welfare. The scope of activities varies from state to state but all of the states must concentrate on major components of the Social Development Policy of 1989.

The major components of the 1989 Social Development Policy are:

1. Social Welfare.
2. Community Development.
3. Women's Development.
4. Youth Development.
5. Sports Development.

The sub-divisions of the policy are:

- Family and Child Welfare.
- Rehabilitation
- Counselling and Corrections.
- Care of the Elderly.
- Social Security for the Unemployed.
- Teenage Single Parents and Orphans

When the Europeans came to West Africa in the early 1900s, they established structures to replace what existed in form of traditional welfare services. Hence the present arrangement came through the establishment of agencies in response to problems highlighted earlier as well as provision of social services like education, health care, urban housing and etc.

The development of the policies were all structured after the British system. A few of the policies are listed below:

- 1922 - Public Social Service;
- 1937 - Establishment of Juvenile Prison in Enugu;
- 1943 - Enactment of Native Children Custody and Reformation Ordinance
- 1943/45 - Children and Young Person's Ordinance and Law. 1960 Nigeria's Independence declaration.
- 1969 - National Commission for Rehabilitation. Decree. 1973 The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Decree 24 Nigerian National Advisory Committee on Social Development (NACSD)

- 1983 - National Youth Policy.
- 1989 - Social Development Policy.
- 2001 - National Youth Policy (Revised).

The provisions of these policies usually serve as guidelines for action and frame of reference for social agencies and determine the role and functions of social workers in Nigeria presently.

Repositioning Social Work in Nigeria:

I will like to state categorically here that repositioning social work in Nigeria should be a collective action for major stakeholders both academic and professionals in Nigeria. I have had the opportunity to visit the School of Social Work, University of Pennsylvania in 2003 and attended the 6th Pan African Social Work Conference in Nairobi Kenya and have discovered the need for collaboration among academics and professionals in social work profession.

What I have found out from these two trips is the realization that Schools of Social Work around the world select or adopt particular intervention approach or technique from existing theories which are taught to students to be applied on the field during their fieldwork, for example, the School of Social Work now School of Social Policy and Practice (SP2) of the University of Pennsylvania developed the "Penn Approach" from Otto Rank's Functional Approach which had its roots In Freudian psychoanalysis and diagnostic social work theory of the early 1920s.

Part of the agency's expectation to meet the criteria for professional education, supervisors on the field who are the professional social workers are to assist student's integration of classroom learning and field practice experiences, hence there cannot be any other time for the machinery to be set in motion for the 4cs i.e collaboration, coordination, consultation and cooperation among academics and professionals. These could be inform of seminars, short courses, exchange of visits and constant communication and interaction. Apart from the fact that professionals will know exactly what students are to learn on the

field, it will also be an opportunity for them to Increase their professional skills and expertise.

It is also obvious that research is necessary to understand the origins and growth of our various problems for our present needs and to plan meaningfully for the future .

In as much as we have professionals on the field who have been trained in accordance with British/ European standards, we have seen from the history and development of social welfare services in Nigeria and other parts of the world how the profession is strictly tied to policies, hence a deep knowledge of social policies and social system theories are indispensable ingredients of the social work profession.

Looking back to our past through the rear view mirror, it is obvious that things have changed. The traditional society which are so much cherish is fast giving way to modernization. New information technology new ways of life have emerged and times are changing fast. In fact, the young people of today appear to be living in jet age, knowledge explosion and a tsunami of information and communication technology to the extent that adults and elderly people of this generation are at variance with the youth.

Narrowing down to new development m Nigeria, some important happenings are worthy of note:

- ◆ the oil spillage of the Niger-Delta area which has resulted in the majority of youth in the area being jobless and therefore delinquent;
- ◆ the market economy which has already been globalised is gradually resulting into marginalization of middle Income workers; human trafficking and unjust wage reward;
- ◆ the housing needs of uncountable people moving from the rural areas to towns and cities in search of greener pastures which is causing tremendous increase in slum building and criminal tendencies;
- ◆ high rate of migration is being recorded daily as Nigerians both old and young travel to other places in the world so as to lead quality lives with its attendant consequences of family separation; child neglect, emotional instability, etc.

- ◆ many more people more than ever before are growing old due to a lot of positive factors and the ageing population keep increasing fast usually with little or not social security;
- ◆ child labour, child trafficking and street children is becoming normal occurrence in our major cities.

Conclusion

These issues and concerns are counties and I am sure that you can count/ recount more of these woes efallen our nation while social workers look on I seize this opportunity to challenge us to wake up to our God-given responsibilities. As social workers we should be responsive to such issues in our communities and act weapony accordingly. If these is done we shall be of effective participation in basic education. By so doing the Education For All goals will easier to achieve.

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