CHALLENGES OF ETHNICITY AND SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTIONS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
The study examines the challenges of ethnicity and social work interventions in Nigeria. The cultural and religious background of the nation is prone to multi-ethnic and cultural diverse society with conflictogenic challenges. These challenges arose due to complex cultural diversity with socio-cultural differences which anchored on the historical antecedent of Nigerian federalism. It has been observed that National integration in Nigeria and the attempt to foster unity-in-diversity tend to create diverse conflicts and poses obstacles to unification and peaceful co-existence of the people of Nigeria. In other words, ethnicity took the center stage in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the people with pathogenic consequences. In view of the fact that all efforts made to eradicate ethnicity and its negative influence in the body polity of Nigeria were futile, social work intervention becomes imperative and quintessential. That is, the application of social work as a mechanism for realizing unity, peaceful co-existence, progress, stable governance and development is recommended. Besides, the application of social work practices in terms of counseling, awareness creation, sensitization, and behavioral change process will make a difference in eradicating ethnicity and its ills in the society. Word count: 191

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INTRODUCTION
The political theatre of Nigeria as a nation got its bedrock from ethnic consideration with complex and proliferation of diverse interest and orientations. The interest portrayed in socio-political, economic, cultural and religious sphere has in diverse ways caused some dislocation and discrepancies on the advancement of our nation, Nigeria. Today, developmental strides in terms of sustainable cultural heritage, socio-economic development, digital technology among others which would have instilled social integration and development in our society are hindered by the elites or leaders from some regions or ethnic group or group of persons with similar if not same ethnic group, interest and orientations. Sometimes we mistakenly defined them as “political leaders or elites”, often times their leadership style does not anchor on the interest of a Federal State which we belong, rather they hold up to the complex cultural diversity with socio-cultural differences upon the historical antecedent of Nigerian federalism.
Therefore, the attempt to foster unity –in-diversity in Nigeria still remains a dream yet to come. The whims and caprices of the so-called elites have injected enormous ills into the fabric of our society. Thus, the objective to achieve a uniting force and peaceful co-existence as well as progress and strides in advancement is a major challenge. For example one of the major problem we have today is resource control, revenue allocation and placement of priority in terms of projects and programmes.

The context within the ethnic communities where the resources are naturally placed and who also assumed they laid the national egg, but can’t benefit, have but rather suffered a lot of victimization, injustice and neglect. This has called for series of agitation resulting to tension and conflict between indigenous communities and oil multinational companies and at other times with government security agents (Aka and Ikeorji, 2019). The question of why a community will inherit environmental crisis like oil spillage, degradation, pollution and loss of aquatic lives and agricultural activities emanating from the activities of these multi-nationals without cleansing or rehabilitation, lack of employment, starvation poverty lack of pipe-borne water and a lot of other accompanied ills call for injustice. All these inject in the minds of the less privilege minority of the ethnic group among other Niger Delta, (oil –producing communities) region of the world, as a dumping ground which is only useful in their contribution to the extraction of Oil that feed other ethnic groups who do not suffer the fate of environmental recklessness.

Social work profession has particular expertise to understand and address problems related to community disequilibrium, including ethnicity. Social work is a helping profession that provide service delivery to navigate social systems, create necessary programmes, and connect at risk individual with resources. They work with all people regardless of their demographic characteristics and are committed to serving the most vulnerable members of communities. Social workers’ skills in navigating complex systems of care for their clients make the social work profession uniquely qualified to resolve and tackle ethnicity challenges. Indeed, social work skills are invaluable in ensuring the integration of diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria.

In a generic sense, the best efforts and intentions of social work may still pose ethical questions if the processes and services do not adequately translate into the desired outcome of adequately responding to resolving the problems of ethnicity. Ethically, social work professionals are held to the standard of the National Association of Social Work code of ethics which stipulates that a social work has an ethical responsibility to serve the broader society, by providing appropriate professional skills in service delivery which highlights the need to integrate and unite all sections and group of individuals. It is against this background that this study is articulated to examine the role of social work in mitigating the effects of ethnicity in Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Ethnic diversities in Nigeria
Nigeria as a nation, operating federalism is characterized with proliferation of ethnic groups with diverse interest and orientations. The Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo among other ethnic groups as being ethnocentric; they persuade other ethnic group to accept their ideologies and exhibit monopolistic tendencies as being ideal with desirable attributes, and more civilized than others. A nation with diverse genetic stock of ethnic background being subjected to the aforementioned under a characterized Federal State like Nigeria?

This call for some mind-boring questions that one need to ponder thus:
Is it why there is no security in our dear nation Nigeria’s?
Is it why those elites/leaders perpetrate themselves in governance?
Considering Nigerian National Anthem; Are we real compatriots?
Are we still one Nigeria?
Are we healthy and serving our father land?

Descending to the broad definition of ethnic culture which tend to dominate the current debates within the democratization processes. Edewor et al (2014) in affirmative upheld that culture and ethnic diversity have become vague terms, to be interpreted within specific contexts in order to make them useful. This need and potential for re-interpretation make the concepts vulnerable to misuse within conflict situations. They further added that leaders interpreted the concepts through their own specific historical and political perspective on relationship between competing groups. One typical use of ethnic culture in mobilization of support by
kaufman (2006) as cited in Edewor et al (2014), is in its combination with the concept of human’ identity’ cultural identity then defines people’s cultural bonding, the group to which they belong. Within mobilization tactic, ethnic or cultural identity is usually portrayed as a fixed characteristic, which must be defined against “others” who are generally viewed as competing for the same resources, power or status. The Nigerian government has at all times shown interest for national identity to uphold a uniting force for purpose of national consciousness and nation building. This has always been in the contrary, because to make diverse cultural identities and integral part of the national one has only recorded success in theory and not in practice. This would have been an imperative for a country like Nigeria with about 370 different ethnic groups (Alubo, 2006; Edewor et al, 2014).

Ethnicity as a concept is deeply related to the general practice of alienation and identity branding whereas branding has always characterized both intra-global and international relations, and where also, opportunities, rights and privilege are functions of who you are and where you are from (Olayiwola, 2016, Aka and Uzoh, 2019). Furthermore, ethnicity is conceptualized as “the employment or mobilization of ethnic identity and difference to gain advantage in situations of competition, conflict or cooperation”. The concept of ethnic origin is an attempt to classify people, not according to their current nationality, but according to commonalities in their social background. Accordingly, Olayiwola (2016) cited in Ayate and Akuva (2013:180), affirming that perceptive work observed that ethnicity is the deliberate and conscious tracing of one’s identity to a particular ethnic group and allowing such feeling to determine the way one relates with people and things, ethnicity creates the brackets of “we”, “they”, “ours”, “theirs” feeling. Ethnicity makes it very difficult for different ethnic groups to agree on anything; this could be the reason for the birth and re-birth of ethnocentrism in the Nigerian context.

Ethnicity being a social signifier in the Nigeria context, is associated generally with a sense of belonging based on the awareness of having a common language, culture, belief and historical setbacks experienced in Sub-Saharan Africa that hinder growth and development. These setbacks manifest in situations where strong loyalties for ethnic tribe tend, in some way, to impact negatively on the growth and development of the “larger society”, which comprises various ethnic groups in Nigeria, for instance, ethnic loyalties lead to conflicts when political allocations apparently do not favour a particular ethnic tribe or region (Agbani, 2016). Also, Ekanade (2011), stressed that budgets for the national income gained from natural resources have stirred up ethnic conflicts in Nigeria. In other words, some ethnic groups express concerns about inequality especially in areas of revenue allocation and resource control. For instance, the numerous conflict recorded in Ogoni land of Rivers State, Nigeria have been epitome of such agitations as they experience treatments they perceive to be unfair with injustice.

Nigeria was traditionally structured basically on cultural orientations, the current ethnicity dialogue in Nigeria has been in association within the geographical structural partition of the present society. The dialogue stretched back to the colonial British government. This structuring was established for easy governance by the British Masters. They merged political divisions of the country along the lines of the three main ethnic tribes (Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo), hence, the political parties were strongly ethnically driven. This key administrative structure, however, did not consider the cultural differences of the ethnic groups and the likelihood of the desire for power resulting in ethnic-political conflicts in the near future (Akinboye and Anifowoshe, 1999; Nyambegera, 2002) cited in Agbani (2016). For examples, the long-standing recognition of three ethnic zones in Nigeria was oblivious of the fact that other ethnic groups would later rise up and seek equal recognition, allocation of resources and political positions at the federal and state level.

The unification of ethnic divide enhances the sensitivity of tribalism as well as ethnocentrism which cannot be ignored. These patriotic tribes incorporates the belief that having one’s own kind in power will lead to the ethnic group benefiting from the nation’s resources. But when Nigeria got her independence there was change in nomenclature: “State division” this aspect undermined the importance of man-power with required knowledge and experience to hold political positions with a penchant to trigger the growth and development in Nigeria and her regions (Obi, 2001 and Nyambegera, 2002). This was born out of the fact that creation of more state did not comprehend with qualified personnel to handle and control the apparatus of governance,
it rather ignited tribalism and ethnocentrism at the topmost point. In other words, too many people are handling offices to which they are not qualified. For example, the creation of 12 states, 19 stated and to present 36 states came up with the challenges of man-power that is so naïve archaic and ‘tribalistic’ in nature. These challenges rooted the people (so called man-power) within the frame of their ethnic groups and cultural heritage that gradually re-birth (Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo) into ethnocentrism instead of Nigerian Federalism.

These scenarios triggered significant inequality within the regions as well as nationally, as the state policies are highly regressive alongside extraordinary share of state expenditure captured by national and regional elites. As Edewor and Aluko (2014) put it, Nigerians tend to view their society in ethnic or religious terms therefore, the questions for us here are:

i. To what extent are the ethnic (or religious) patterns in Nigerian politics the product of a primordial cultural diversity?

ii. To what extent are they the product of a struggle for spoils in a specific institutional context?

iii. To what extent are they the cause and the consequence of political conflict?

iv. What constitutionally backed institutions can be developed to manage these ethnic/cultural diversity and conflicts?

v. How do we achieve national integration in Nigeria?

Prior to the attainment of independence, Nigeria’s constitutional development experiences were concerned with the principal goal of managing ethnicity which had shown clear signs of subverting the nation-building project. Federalism, the creation of regions and states and local governments, the shift from parliamentary to presidential, the institutionalization of quota systems, the prohibition of ethnic political parties, consociation politicking, and the adoption of the federal character principle are some of the approaches that Nigeria has taken to manage ethnic diversity (Ukiwo, 2005), several works on ethnicity in Nigeria have been committed to examining the impact of these approaches to the management of ethnicity (Edewor and Aluko, 2007; Suberu, 2001; Osaghae, 1998; Nnoli, 1995; Adamolekun, 1991; Ekeh and Osaghae, 1989, Mustapha, 1986; Ekekwe, 1986; Horowitz, 1985). The affirmation of this scholars as cited by Edewor (2014) have examined issue from different theoretical dimension and upheld that while these initiatives have solved some old problems, they have also generated many unintended consequences that have worsen ethnicity. For instance Edewor (2014) cited Suberu (2001) who noted with respect to revenue allocation and states creation: The establishment of nine separate commissions on revenue allocation since 1946 has led to neither development of an acceptable or stable sharing formula nor the elaboration of an appropriate framework of values and rules within which a formula can be devised and incrementally adjusted to cope with changing circumstances (P. II).

National integration in Nigeria contest has been an attempt to forge “Unity in diversity” and aggressive attempts to ignore, if not dissolve, historic differences. Successive military rules sought to wish away socio-cultural difference and impose uniformity in spite of complex genetic stock of cultural diversity, unfortunately, the more such project were pursued, the more acute the contradictions become, the more conflicts erupted; and the more problems were created, which posed obstacles to unity, peaceful coexistence, progress and stable development.

Ethnocentrism is a behavior that is closely related to ethnic behavior. According to Pierson and Thomas (2011), ethnocentrism is an ideology that produces a strong orientation towards the norms, values, history and beliefs of a particular ethnic group, so that the interests of that group are always or frequently placed above the interests of other ethnic groups in the attitudes of both individuals and institutions of ethnocentric societies. Ethnocentrism exists in any society where the dominant ethnic group seeks to persuade others that there is only one ethic group, which has a monopoly of ideal and desirable attributes, or is more civilized than others. This is based on the assumption that it is both possible and desirable to define that which is “ideally human” or more worthy of belonging to humanity than other ethnic groups. Ethnocentrism assumes that the culture, values and moral standards of the dominant group are necessary to the wellbeing of people in other ethnic groups. Ethnocentrism discourages efforts to maintain or promote the history, language, religion or customs of ethnic groups outside the dominant culture if they
go beyond the limits of that which the dominant group has defined as acceptable or appropriate (Pierson and Thomas, 2011).

**Ethnic conflicts in Nigeria**

So many ethnic conflicts caused by ethnicity had sprung up in the body polity of Nigeria. Some of these took the shape of ethno-religious character. A good example is the ethnic minority conflicts in the Niger Delta region. The major ethnic groups tend to be embarking on economic and political war against the minorities that constitute the Niger Delta area. For instance, the environmental recklessness among the oil bearing communities gave birth to the Movement for the survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) (Third World Traveler Report, 2006). The movement castigates the Nigerian Federalism as arbitrary and constructed to favour the major ethnic nationalities like the Hausa – Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo. The major agitation for the Ogoni movement borders on resource control such as petroleum resources for the advancement of Ogoni land and people.

A similar agitation came up by the Ijaw Youth Congress (IYC) criticizing the unbalance governance and exploitation of Ijaw natural resources for the benefit of other ethnic groups. The situation was unbearable such that IYC threatened to disobey all military edicts and degrees that rob their people and communities of the right to ownership and control of lives and resources which were enacted without the consent of the resource produced communities. The uniformity of the IYC stretched across other ethnic regions with attendant conflicts and violence, demanding for self-determination and justice (IYND, 1998).

According to Third World Traveller Reports (2006), in 1990 the Ogoni Central Council, led by writer and environmental activist Ken Saro-Wiwa, presented a petition to the government and people of Nigeria. In over 30 years of oil mining on their soil, the petitioners stated, Ogoni land had provided Nigeria with total revenue estimated at over 40 billion naira (then about US $ 2 billion), for which they had received “NOTHING” in return. Rather, they had “no representation whatsoever in any institutions of the Federal Government of Nigeria; no pipe-borne water; no electricity; no job opportunities; and no social or economic projects of the federal government”. “It is intolerable”, they declared, that one of the richest areas of Nigeria should wallow in abject poverty and destitution”. The petitioners accused the federal and state governments of promoting ethic politics that is “gradually pushing the Ogoni people to slavery and possible extinction”.

Subsequently, the movement for the survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) was formed as the umbrella organization for all Ogoni groups fighting for greater resource allocation and control. Among its objectives, MOSOP hoped to achieve political control of Ogoni affairs by the Ogoni, the right to control to control and use of a “fair proportion” of the economic resources found on Ogoni land and the right to protect the Ogoni environment and ecology from further degradation (Saro-wiwa, 1992). The emergence of MOSOP, led by Saro-wiwa after the exit of other Ogoni leaders (who were later murdered in the ensuing crisis), changed the tone and tenor of the struggle against both the state and the oil companies. In a campaign that was as international as it was national, Saro-Wiwa brought the world’s attention to the ecological devastation wreaked on Ogoni land, as well as to the oppression and violent repression there, unequalled in any other part of the world where oil is extracted. The symbol and leader of the Ogoni struggle, Saro-Wiwa introduced as Ogoni flag and national anthem that fired the agitation against the state and the oil multinationals. Before long, other oil-yielding peoples, such as the Ijaws, Itsekiris, and Ondos, were launching their own campaigns (Saro-Wiwa, 1992).

The Nigerian state responded by imposing a reign of terror. Between 1993 and 1998, when the struggle was at its peak, the military regime of the Late General Sani Abacha deployed a military task force on Ogoni land to “keep the peace”. Lieutenant Colonel Paul Okutimo, the task force commander, boasted that he knew 103 ways to kill. For many Ogoni, this was no mere boast, as the soldiers ravaged villages, raped women, and randomly killed men, women, and children in a sadistic manner. The infamous hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight Ogoni compatriots by the Abacha regime in November 1995 marked the height of the repression (Third World Traveler, 2006). With the resultant conflictogenic situation posed on Saro-Wiwa’s family and the community at large, the struggle continued. It also affected the psychological balance of
forces. The Ogoni case for self-determination became an International cause celebre after the 1995 hangings of Saro-wiwa and the others. Since then, the oil companies and the Nigerian state have been forced to defend themselves before the court of international public opinion. Ojo (1999) reported that the 1995 hangings seemed to have quickened the pulse of the struggle for resource control and democratic inclusiveness in the oil-yielding communities. Accordingly, Oronto Douglas of Environmental Right Action (ERA), quickly adds that “the youth of the Niger Delta are not waiting and doing nothing. The Ijaw Youth Council, the Isoko Youth Council, and MOSOP are saying, ‘Hold it, Corporations. Hold it, government. You can’t do what you like…” These groups, including the National Youth Council of Ogoni people (NYCOP), have been organizing protests and campaigns, and sometimes have prevented the oil companies from carrying out exploration activities on their lands. Their struggle got a big boost in October 2000, when the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeal ruled that the Ogoni people could bring a class-action suit against Shell. The Ogoni went to court to seek redress for Shell’s collusion with the Nigerian military in the brutal treatment meted out to the Ogoni. The ruling set a precedent that could precipitate thousands of legal actions against the other oil corporations. Shell plans to appeal. Over the years, the Nigerian Federal government and the oil companies have initiated programs to quell the discontent of people in the Niger Delta. Even under the cruel regimes of General Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1993) and Abacha (1993-1998), the oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) Coordinated Development Projects in the area. But like most institutions under military control, OMPADEC turned out to be a cesspool, in which billions of dollars disappeared into the private pockets of commission operators and soldiers. The oil companies, for their part, set up several projects, including provision of basic infrastructure, scholarship schemes and community-relations units through which community members could express their needs. Yet the oil companies have continued to deny responsibility for the ecological destruction.

Boele (1995), reported that as far as the communities are concerned, those efforts are insignificant given the billions of petrodollars that are extracted from the soil. This assessment applies also to the civilian regime of President Obasanjo. The most significant step taken by the current government, the establishment of a Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), has come under a hail of criticism. As stressed by one of the Ogoni patriot and scholar, Ben Naanen described NDDC to be a monumental distraction, which may do no better than it institutional predecessor, OMPADEC, in achieving its development task. Some people in the oil-yielding communities see the oil multinationals as potential stakeholders in the development of the region, but unfortunately enough as far back as 1983, the Inspectorate Division of the state-owned Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) noted the environmental problems caused by the activities of the oil companies in the Niger Delta which describe the: “Slow poisoning of the waters of the country, and the destruction of vegetation, and agricultural land by oil spills which occur during petroleum operations…” (Third World Traveler, 2006, P. 2). Since inception of the oil industry in Nigeria, it continues, there has been no concerted effort on the part of the Government, let alone the oil operators, to control the environmental problems associated with the industry.

Another ethnic conflict in Nigeria that is so pronounced that the federal government almost tagged it a terrorist movement was the movement for the sovereign state of Biafra (MOSOP). The MOSOP criticized the federal government of strategically marginalizing the Igbo ethnic tribe. According to Obi (2001), the Igbo tribe have been relegated to the background, marginalized and denied its rightful place in Nigerian politics. The core issues in the conflict between the MOSOP and the Nigerian state are political and socio-economic marginalization. Ekanade (2011) opined that the Igbo people had suffered untold neglect which has lasted for more than five decades and it is as a result of the civil war in which the Igbo spearheaded and also suffered the greatest casualties. Ibeau (2013) further stated that the attendant impact of the marginalization became poverty, diseases, illiteracy, and unemployment and in most cases lack of food causing many Igbo to migrate to other areas for livelihood. Thus the neglect of the region pauperizes the people of the region to the extent that the South East Region became the poorest region in Nigeria today (Okolie, Onyema and Bassey, 2019).
Another major ethnic conflict was the Yoruba Odua socio cultural group that expressed their feelings through various violent social movements at various times demanding for improved socio-economic condition and improvement of their people and environment (Hossain, 2013). The group agitates for resource control and political autonomy of the South West Region. It has been argued that the South West region had suffered from grave damages as a result of the infiltration of other ethnic groups on the political culture of the people. Frynas (2010) asserts that the Fulani herdsman conflict is a tribal conflict that is a common occurrence in the Nigeria and that the continuous killings and destruction of lives and property by these herdsman has created security risks and had rendered socio-economic activities almost impossible in areas affected.

The picture of displacement of people in the North East is made worse by the menace of Boko haram. The Boko haram, according to Soliman and Rogge (2002) is an ethno religious group made up largely by the Fulani is a threat to the livelihood of majority of the inhabitants of the region. The devastation caused by the Boko haram mayhem has made it virtually impossible for the North East people to eke out a living. As Ajaero (2008) argued ethnic conflicts among the Jangokataf ethnic groups in Jos Plateau have led in some cases to the systematic debasement and assault on the wellbeing of the people, leading to the collapse of the political and socio-economic system in some areas, and to negative impact in terms of livelihood of the people and the survival strategies they have designed for generations (Ajaero, 2008).

Social work’ basic knowledge and skills in the resolution of ethnicity

The knowledge –based skills for indigenous social workers are dependent upon the commitment to the upmost ethical standards of practice to address the issues of social justice, inequality, and structural oppression taking into consideration the “traditional core” values of respect for human dignity as well as self-determination. These practice standards according to NASW Code (2015), recognizes the structural oppression of indigenous people through the systemic beliefs that they are inherently inferior and must be assimilated into the dominant Euro–centric culture. This has paved way to creation of reservation alongside extinction of traditional structures and processes that support human development and functioning, cultural and environmental functioning, and patterns of social interaction among indigenous people (ACSW Council, 2013). These practice address a unique standard for actualizing the fundamental objective of social work profession which work in line with social change and social justice. Therefore, social workers who want indigenous recognition must operate within the framework of adequacy with knowledge-base, practice experience and service delivery by demonstrating their ability in the following aspect.

1. Knowledge of the community, its internal processes, modes of development and change, its social services and resources.
2. Traditional knowledge located in the cultural sacred place of practice, and encouraging cultural continuity of ceremony related to the place of practice.
3. Working knowledge of and understanding of indigenous language in the place of practice, (ACSW Council, 2013);
4. Knowledge of human development and human behaviour with emphasis on the wholeness of the individual and the reciprocal influence of man and his total human, social, economic and cultural environment;
5. Knowledge of the meaning and the effect on the individuals, groups, and the communities of the cultural heritage, including religions belief, spiritual values, laws and other social institutions;
6. Knowledge of the social services, their structure, organization and methods;
7. Knowledge of the self (of the social worker) awareness of himself, and responsibility for his own emotions and attitudes as these affect his professional functions;
8. Knowledge of core values and practices of services in indigenous commodities; by way of reciprocity, interdependence, interconnectedness and a unifying participatory force (ACSW Council, 2013);
9. Knowledge of the various and district levels of the kinship system of indigenous cultures of practice (ACSW Council, 2013).
10. Knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework for indigenous social work, specially, the integral nature of the kinship system to responsibilities for practice (ACSW Council 2013).
11. The knowledge to advocate/advance an egalitarian society in contributing to the development and modification of social policy.

12. Also uphold firmly to the philosophy that no one ethnic group is superior to another but rather instilled the mechanism for realizing unity, progress, peaceful co-existence for the growth and development of the cultural heritage.

In a more generic ways for one to become an indigenous social worker, the person must have a mastery of an indigenous social worker experiential practice with core traditional teacher or community elite(s) who are the custodian of custom and tradition. These are anthropologist and personnel’s with traditional pedagogy knowledge – based whose philosophical guide to indigenous social work practitioners offers a soothing palliative for their apprenticeship and authentication for their practice.

**Theoretical framework**

In the analysis of social work interventions on ethnicity in Nigeria, the frustration aggression theory by John Dollard, Neal and Muller (1939) and Guidance and counselling process theory by Lavelin (2006) were adopted.

**Frustration Aggression theory**

Frustration-aggression theory anchors on aggression proposed by John Dollard, Neal E. Muller (1939) and further developed by Miller and Barker (1941) and Leonard Berkowitz (1969). The central thesis of this theory is that: aggression is always the result of frustration. Hence, given the required condition, and individual whose basic desires are thwarted and who consequently experiences profound sense of dissatisfaction and anger is likely to react to his condition by directing aggressive behavior to what he perceives as the target or source of his frustration.

Although experimental psychologists have argued that frustration does not always result in aggression, and that aggression can occur without frustration, the theory has shown that social movements arise when people feel deprived of what they perceive as their “fair share” and thus engage in deviant behaviours when their institutional means do not match cultural goals. In summary, the theory basically states that all problems, crisis and conflicts in society are caused by different groups when expectations are not satisfactorily met, the frustration will transfer the aggression into violence against perceived sources of the frustration. It is argued that modernization intensifies conflicts especially over the distribution of scarce resources between groups and produces political violence.

This theory has some implications on this study in the sense that the Nigerian state has witnessed ethnic conflicts of devastating nature in recent times. Ethnicity and its challenges is at the centre of these conflicts. The uncontrolled expressions of marginalization, neglect of some ethnic groups, exploitation of some ethnic groups and denial of rights among others has exacerbated ethnic conflicts, leading to pauperization of life and general absence of development in some ethnic regions, while other ethnic groups continue to benefit from the national wealth at the expense of others. The ethnic conflicts reported daily across the country are direct reactions to government’s failure to address the problems of ethnicity, this led to frustration, violence, anger and aggression.

**Guidance and counselling process theory**

This theory also referred to as behavioural change theory, was propounded by Lavelin (2006). It assumed that behaviour change is a function of guidance and counselling, the person and his environment. This theory provides the basis for effective guidance and counselling process which takes into consideration the sum of all the personal and environmental factors of interaction. The theory postulates that factors such as age, sex, intelligence, family relationship, socio-economic status, educational background influence a person’s behaviour. An individual’s behaviour is the combined product of both environmental pulls and personality characteristics. Due to the relative influence of the environment on behaviour, the individual living in an environment which is psychologically unhealthy will exhibit one form of instability or the other.
This theory postulates that in most cases individual experiences influence how guidance and counselling is carried out, therefore, a set of sufficient and necessary processes should be followed if guidance and counselling must be effective. Those processes are believed to be relative to the condition or situation addressed. The theory assumes that guidance and counselling is a result of evolutionary response to human needs. What is required are the necessary and sufficient conditions that embrace a particular case or condition, with the definition of the content relating to the client concerned. The terms used in describing necessary and sufficient conditions of guidance and counselling are all the variables that will influence behaviour change, that is, depending on the values and nature of the client under consideration.

The process adopted in this theory is to avoid pre-existing positions. What is sought is to understand and to conceptualize the processes of guidance and counselling such as the relationship between the external and the internal conditions. It also sought to approach guidance and counselling anew, understanding all that has gone before, but making no decisions and no judgments on it.

In relating this theory to the intervention of social work on ethnicity and its effects on the society, it can be deduced that ethnicity and all its challenges hinder socio economic development of a nation. It also implies that what will make ethnicity to be eliminated in Nigeria is when people, especially those that champion it are counseled to change from ethnocentric behavior and accept the idea of a united and egalitarian society, as this is far better and safer for them. It also suggests that social workers must be well experienced and skilled in counseling activities in order to cause behavior change among the different ethnic groups in the country. The idea behind this theory is that there must be a good guidance and counselling for all persons irrespective of the ethnic group they belong and to help them to change from their ethnic behavior and expressions.

The theory is also relevant in the sense that the wellbeing of Nigeria is seen as a result of evolutionary response to the necessary and sufficient conditions of guidance and counselling that embrace relative content. It therefore suggests that in guiding or counselling the citizens of Nigeria, both the necessary and sufficient conditions that will achieve the desired unity of Nigeria should be taken into consideration. The theory also highlights the fact that in the process of guidance, we should avoid pre-existing positions.

Thus, what is needed is to understand and to conceptualize the processes of guidance relative to our national interest, needs, perception and response. The social worker should as a matter of necessity approach ethnic challenges by guiding the citizens of Nigeria anew, understanding all that has gone before, and helping them to make the necessary change in their behavior.

Conclusion and recommendations

It is clear that regions represented in Nigeria are built on ethnic foundations. Each of these region represent a huge interest and value for its ethnic, religious and cultural heritage in diversity. Therefore, it is sufficing to say that, National integration in a super-multi-cultural state like Nigeria is impossible without entrenching a generic and sustaining culture as this comprises the values shared by all groups and constitute a common atmosphere in which the diverse ethnic stock conceptualize and appreciate the state. By so doing, the denial of the basic needs of access, identity, autonomy, security and equality, will be at a standstill. Also ethnic violence in Nigeria distort the pattern of governance emanating from ethno-religions conflict, ethnic rivalry, suspicion, hostility and other negative vices could be arrested. This therefore call for the intervention of social work that can promote the spirit of oneness (unity in diversity). Social work is believed by this study to have the capacity to achieve this goal thereby ushering in the desired growth and advancement for egalitarian society. Also, social work intervention can be a uniting force for social integration, and will be able to uphold to its ethics and philosophy by ensuring that no ethnic group would assume superiority over another. Through awareness creation, sensitization, conscientization and enlightenment/advocacy campaigns, social workers can permanently eliminate ethnicity and its challenges in Nigeria.

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