THE REVIEW OF INDIGENOUS AND MODERN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examined the review of indigenous and modern Social Work in Nigeria specifically the definition of Social Work and traditional charity. It accessed the global definition of Social Work as a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to Social Work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing. The thematic paper tactically the history of Social Work in Nigeria in three folds such as the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras. It also went further to look at how Social work as a discipline was established in the University of Benin. It recommended that indigenous knowledge should be upheld and the value system of the blacks should be determined by the blacks and not with foreign ideology.

Keywords*: Community, Practice, Social Work, Voluntary, Welfare.*

1. Introduction

Social Work is a sub-discipline of the social sciences that focuses on the human interactions and other social interactions. As a Social Science discipline, Social Work focuses on the vulnerable and marginalized members of the society and also stands in the gap for the oppressed members of the society, some of these vulnerable members include; women, children, physically challenged, the aged, amongst others: However Social Work as a profession evolved in Europe and America because of humanitarian needs. Social Work according to the International Federation of Social Workers (2014), is 'a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to Social Work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing.

Morales and Sheafor (2004) stated that Social Work and Social Workers help to create climate favourable for adjustment and the possibility of minimizing such situations an individual finds difficult to cope with. According to Idyorough, (2008), Social Work is a helping profession that utilizes skills and theories of human behaviour and social systems in the resolution or alleviation of social problems affecting individuals, groups and communities. Therefore Akaba and Egharevba (2018) opined that traditional charity (indigenous Social Work) is the traditional and cultural way of assisting the individual, families, groups, organizations and community for their social functioning.

Social Work is a practiced profession and an academic discipline that recognizes that interconnected historical, socioeconomic, cultural, spatial, political and personal factors serve as opportunities and/or barriers to human wellbeing and development. Structural barriers contribute to the perpetuation of inequalities, discrimination, exploitation and oppression. (Drower 2002).

The development of critical consciousness through reflecting on structural sources of oppression and/or privilege on the basis of criteria such as race, class, language, religion, gender, disability, culture and sexual orientation and developing action strategies towards addressing structural and personal barriers in the Society. These are central to emancipatory practice where the goals are the empowerment and liberation of people. In solidarity with those who are disadvantaged, social work strives to alleviate poverty, liberate the vulnerable and oppressed and promote social inclusion and social cohesion. (Naidoo, 2004)

On its part, philosophy according to Geddes & Grosset (2003) is the study of the principles underlying conduct, thought and the nature of the universe; general principles of a field of knowledge; particular system of ethics; composure; calmness. Philosophy has also been defined as a set of beliefs and attitude, ideas, aspiration and goals, values and norms, ethical precepts or principles that enable us to understand and give meaning to existence and reality, to ourselves and our world, to our history and development (Siporin, 1975).

This definition also agrees with that provided by the Nigerian Social Development Policy of 1989 that sees philosophy as the ideas, values, norms, principles and knowledge of the material conditions, social problems and social welfare that was held by the people that led to the development of social work. Aluko (2000), define philosophy as a critical reflection on our belief system with a view to cleansing it of inconsistency, contradictions and elements that are inhibitive to the development of the human personality or dignity.

The History of Social Work in Nigeria

The historical antecedents of social work in Nigeria are traceable to three (3) eras which are: pre-colonialism, colonialism and post-colonialism.

Pre-Colonialism Era

Formal social work practice in Nigeria is relatively new in origin, although in pre-colonial and colonial Nigeria, extended families, social clubs, missionaries and voluntary agencies each provided social services of one kind or another. In pre-colonial Nigeria, customary arrangements and institutional provisions for organizing, mobilizing, administering and coordinating various forms of assistance to the poor and the needy existed among the various ethnic groups and communities' centuries before the contact with Europeans and inception of colonial administration. For example, the traditional (pre-colonial) Igbo social structure revealed the existence of a wide variety of familial, kinship, filial organizations and networks that provided both material and non-material assistance to the needy and poor members of the society. Furthermore, the kinship system in traditional Nigerian society provided for family welfare, child welfare, health, mental health,

and care for older people, informal education, recreation, social planning and development (Okoye, 2013).

The rendering of social services is as old as the earliest human communities and Nigeria has a long tradition of assisting the individuals within the community context. In traditional Nigeria society, corporate existence was supreme. People came together and lived in harmonious clan or lineage in groups with a sense of belonging, solidarity, and affinity which defined the individuals and subsumed them under the general will. Underlying Nigeria social structures is a web of relationships by blood or marriage, networking the entire communities, and in that manner making everyone his brother's keeper. The sense of relationship and solidarity provided by kinship expresses itself in mutual support, assistance and succor and in the process kinship groups met the recreational, religious, legal and economic needs of their members. They served as social security and social welfare agencies providing for the elderly, the sick, the unemployed, and gave shelter and food to new migrants. These were a form of friendship network of relatives, a readymade source of companionship and care-giving. During distress situation, people move in to live with their kinsmen in another area without any forms of formality or resistance (Ogundipe, 2002).

Traditional Nigerian social structures include the organizational divisions into clans, lineages, families, households and individuals. Some of these structural divisions avail concerted action in times of stress, crises, sorrow, loss and failures. They encouraged and shared in the pain, joy and success of their members. Learning of genealogies of dissent was a traditional form of education, instilling a sense of origins, genealogy, acceptance, sacred duty and history. Genealogies also established linkages between the people and their ancestors. The dead were believed to watch over the living from a higher plane above the earthly one and to render assistance or punishment as appropriate. Clan and lineage members believing in a common ancestor possess a strong sense of identity with one another which often leads to further cooperation and prevent war and conflicts between them. Age grades, traditional rulers, elders' council, local religious leaders/chief priests and other influential members of the community also rendered services and assistance (Ogundipe, 2012). In addition to the bond of unity and cooperation articulated in the extended family, the age grades also provided common fronts for the actualization of goals and expectations of societies and their members.

Therefore, memberships of age-grades were, more or less compulsory for both the old and the young. Each group was homogenous on the basis of age and sex, giving 'voice' to what obtained at the household level. Each group had a specific task to perform for the sustenance of the society while they also served as pressure groups whose opinions could not be brushed aside by the political class. The youthful age groups were given the most assiduous tasks to accomplish ranging from policing, soldiering, clearing and maintenance of roads, building markets, and houses and so on. The adult members, on the other hand, were considered the reservoir of knowledge and wisdom about societal norms, values and beliefs. It is therefore their responsibility to ensure compliance to socially constructed expectations. Sometimes, the elders and/or the youths may deviate from performing their expected roles.

They are also corrected by other groups, including women groups and religious authorities. Through these, there were checks and balances, even for the eldest and the most powerful groups (Olutayo & Omobowale, 2006). For example in Benin Kingdom there existed a well define socio-economic and social network group that provided assistance to needy members. Such groups were the youths organizations known as the Ikpolughe/Eghele, women organization (Ikwevbo), able body men (Edion) and the elders' council. The Ikpolughe was arms of the youths

organization were the junior youths and they responsible for clearing and maintain roads to farms, rivers and streets in the community. The Eghele were the senior arm of the youths organization led by Okaeghele as their leader and they were responsible for more tedious task such as building markets, constructing roads, bridges and houses in collaboration with the Ikpolughe. They also supervise and check mate the conduct and served as role model to the Ikpolughe. Ikwevbo were responsible for nurturing children, preparing young girls for marriage, care for their fellow woman during time of child birth and grief situation. They are specifically known as the caregiver of the aged. While the Edions' were responsible for initiating he Egheles' into menhood and formulates policies, norms and value that guide the conduct of members in collaboration with the elders' council.

The family in Nigeria society is the nucleus of individual and corporate existence. People associate with full families, including grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters, their families and other relatives. Nuclear family is a Euro-American construct which never suited or captured the ideals of family in Nigeria. Put aside western concept of the ideal of polygyny and polyandry one can only properly understood the ideal of family in Nigeria as full and not extended family because by the classificatory system of family in most Nigerian cultures full families are perfectly understood in the indigenous culture. Not having terms like 'uncle', 'cousin', 'niece' 'aunt', 'nephew' etc. (Ekpe, 1983, Obayan, 1995 & Ogundipe, 2012).

The full family unit provides even more service, aid and succour to its members. Within these full families, it was understood that people were nurtured, shared resources, socialized and educated one another. Life in the family compounds was a communal one where the older ones share in the upbringing of the younger ones and also they provide examples and experiences, while the females played the role of nurturing and tending, the males served as authority figures and decision-makers (Ogundipe, 2012).

The younger members of the families and the communities in turn respect and provide for the old in the later part of their lives. Food production was a collective responsibility for matured women and teenage daughters. Water and firewood fetching were almost exclusively the responsibility of women and their daughters. Boys, especially from about the age of seven, assist their fathers in their profession–predominantly farming, crafting, iron work, wood work, etc. and the father in turn help to imbibe masculine attributes in them. Though the females did some farming, the males were often the owners of the means of survival – land – held 'in trust' for the whole of the family who cultivate the land with women having indirect access which was the principle of *usufruit* (that is a system whereby the community own the land and the individuals are to cultivate on it and after individuals harvest their crops, the right to the ownership of the land return to the community) (Olutayo & Omobowale, 2006 & Ogundipe, 2012).

It is, however, important to note that the female children were not only socialized to become 'housewives', but actively participated in the political and economic activities of the community. Indeed, women took part in decision-making processes and settled disputes. They engaged in trade which was an important source of wealth creation and status enhancement. Nonetheless, such participations were often possible because of multiple and collective parenting (Olutayo & Omobowale, 2006). This implies that, the upbringing of the child was located in the center of communal life, was both the responsibility of the biological parents and the community.

Children grow up in an intense situation of kinship, family, and lineage social solidarity. They learn and are bound by their family obligation and family histories. From infancy, they are constantly dealing with relatives who stand to them as loco

parentis or substitutes for parents, brothers and sisters, or who may have special duties and obligations towards them. They learned from a very early age to spread their love and regard their rewards and their worries and concern over larger groups of people. They grow up thus with many affectionate relatives to whom they build up emotional attachments even if these are not as close as their attachments to their parents. This may have the effect of lessening the conflict of relationship. For instance, when a child is in disagreement with his parents, he can seek refuge with these others relatives; if he is orphaned, they practically take his parents' place. The child is thus brought up with a strong sense of community. This mutual support, community, and sense of kinship are among the qualities of the family in the pre-colonial Nigeria (Ekpe, 1983).

The need for solitarily is provided in the education given by the family in the home. Education at this level though informal but were pragmatic, utilitarian and religious-oriented. Obedience to decision towards the public good, harmony and efficiency was a rule of thumb. Intense development of communal spirit was fostered through socialization into clan and lineage structures. Communal duties and obligations rather than rights to clan and lineage members were mandatory. The duties included responsibility for the welfare of clan and lineage members, assisting the indigent and the disadvantaged, integrating the orphaned and widowed and showing hospitality to strangers. Moral and spiritual obligations included protecting human dignity and observing religious laws and sanctions (Ogundipe, 2012).

Life was corporately lived in traditional Nigerian societies. The individual does not exist alone rather he is part of a whole. The community nurture and present the individual who in turn is dependent on the corporate groups. The individual emanates only in terms of other people and it was in terms of the community, the clan, the lineage and the family that he became conscious of his own being. His duties, privileges, and responsibility towards other people defined him. Since the individual was a corporate man and sees himself in terms of others, he was never alone. He shares his striving, achievements, failures with his kinsmen, neighbours and relatives, living or dead. Whatever happened to him happens to all which confirmed the common adage of "I am because you are, since you are, therefore I am". Therefore, the values of cooperation and continuity were high on the priority list. Welfarism, values of friendliness, kindness, hospitality, generosity, honour and respect for the older people and helpfulness were enshrined in the socialization, education, belief and practice of Nigerian people in traditional times (Ogundipe, 2012, Okunola, 2002, & Iwarimie-JaJa, 2002).

Colonial Era

The advent of colonialism brought devastating and corrosive effects on the lives and people of Nigeria. Communal living was discouraged and gradually replaced by the idea of individualism. Many people suffered tremendous losses and therefore were in need of social services. Indeed, it was during the scramble for Africa, that the British Colonialists get a strong hold on Nigeria after an axing and making colony of Lagos. The colonial invasion/incursion was militarily and violently carried out and as such it became a source of stress to the people especially when we consider the fact that the British violently and deceptively procured raw materials from the people without any substantial benefit to them.

In 1906, majority of Nigerian societies were colonized and made to vigorously imbibe capitalist values and the economy became dominated by foreign capitalists who engaged in export of products and external trade. Colonial economic activities in Nigeria were mainly: agriculture, mining, trade, finance and shipping. The means of production were cheap labour, land and capital. Nigerian labour

consisted of peasant producers, petty-traders, forced labour mobilized by the colonialists for military expedition in the colonization process. Following the introduction of monetization, there was scourge in private ownership and commercialization of every commodity of value, including labour power of the people, residents began to suffer emotional problems resulting from capitalist processes of production, distribution and exchange. Those who lost their farm lands and other forms of material wealth were in distress. Many of them were cared for by members of the family, clan and community. To cushion the effect of the suffering, the Christian Missionaries designed and implement intervention plans (Iwarimie-JaJa, 2002).

The Missionaries apart from preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ wherever they settled, their activities set in motion the establishment of hospitals and health clinics to help the infirm and cure the sick. Also were the establishments of educational institutions which enhanced knowledge, created employment opportunities and thus mitigated the incidence of poverty. Notable among these Missionaries in these philanthropic ventures were Dr. E. C. Van Cooten, Dr. W. Hensman and Dr. Irving. These men of goodwill began with the establishment of dispensaries which greatly aided relief work among the local people and those who suffered from inter-city wars and military or naval expeditions which were rather common place phenomena in the Western Coast of Africa in the second half of the 19th century.

The Missionaries also took care of children orphaned or disabled by war and diseases but very significant were the selfless services of Father John Coquard, Father Francois and Rev. Mother Veronique. Rev. Mother Veronique is credited of being the first to bring Catholic nuns into Nigeria in 1793 (Okunola, 2002). In addition, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) established girls' hostel in Lagos which provided shelter, care and helped to reform young girls from prostitution through meaningful self-actualization programs in new careers and jobs. The hostel became the first Girls' Remand Home in Nigeria with Mrs. Coker as the first warden. To assist in providing meaning services to the youths and adults, town unions, development unions and clubs sprang up in the urban centers which include the Young Women Christian Association (YWCA) and the Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) (Iwarimie-JaJa, 2002).

In 1917, the Native Children and Reformation Ordinance was enacted to allow for the treatment of juvenile delinquents. The ordinance considered acts of truancy, vagrancy, vandalism, assaults, sexual abuse and other acts beyond parental control, including robbery, murder, pick-pocketing and abuse of drugs as acts committed by children who simply are in need of care and protection. The period of 1929-1945 accompanied by the 2nd World War (1939-1945) took away many fathers and dislocated many homes, ushered in divorce phenomenon into the Nigerian societies, increase starvation, unemployment, diseases, deaths, run-away children, parental desertion etc. As a result of these problems, public-spirited individuals such as Prince Ibikunle Akintoye, Messrs Ignatius Mensah-Boboe, Franklin, Nelson Cole and Eric Bob-Manuel came together to form a committee of voluntary social workers called the Green Triangle Club. The club encouraged children to come to the hostel and make friends but homeless children in Lagos or children whose parent's attitudes were hostile or punishing were accommodated in the club. The children made adult friends called "big brother" who helped them to learn proper attitude and encourage them to change their anti-social behaviour and Mrs. Balogun was appointed as the first warden (Okunola, 2002).

Another effort that encouraged the establishment of a formal social work practice in Nigeria was based on the research conducted in Lagos Colony by Faulkner in 1942. He observed the situation of loafer/waifs and strays roaming the

street of Lagos. The findings of his research show that there were high incidence of juvenile delinquency in Lagos because of inadequate control measures and necessary services for young people. In view of his findings, Faulkner in collaboration with the Green Triangle Club recommend to the colonial government to set up approved schools and a remand home for delinquent children. In 1943, the first Children and Young Person's Ordinance was enacted. It made provision for the welfare of young children and treatment of young offenders. He classified children and young persons under the law as juvenile offenders, juvenile in need of care and protection and juvenile that may be beyond parental control. As a result of the Ordinance, the first Remand Home and approved school was established in 1945 (Iwarimie-JaJa, 2002).

Post-Colonia Era

The British colonialists in 1960 granted political independence to the geographical entity now refers to as Nigeria. Then it became the responsibility of government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to carter for the welfare and social development of its citizens. Prior to the civil war (197-1970), the Federal Government was charged with the responsibility for social welfare services of the regional governments. This responsibility was discharged by the Social Welfare Division of the Federal Ministry of Labour. The social welfare division of the Federal Ministry of Labour ran the affairs of social welfare services under four units namely: Casework Service, Group Work Services, Approved Schools, Adult Education and Community Development. In order to provide proper administration of welfare services, the government took over the homes that were established by the Missionaries and private individuals. Some of such homes that were taken over by government were the Salvation Army Boys' Industrial Home, the Green Triangle Club and the Church Missionary Society Girls Hostel (Iwarimie-JaJa, 2002 & Okunola, 2002).

In 1967, Nigeria experience the outbreak of the civil war in which majority of Nigerians became internally displaced with no source of livelihood and they also experience decline in their standard of living. Consequently, the overall effect of the war left many Nigerians in poverty and many became psychologically disorganized and in need of socio-psychological and physiological rehabilitation to help improve their social functioning. As a result, the Federal Government empowered every State to establish its own social welfare agencies. However, the first International Conference of Ministers responsible for social welfare had earlier made recommendations that the Federal Government should champion the course of social welfare activities rather than do mere co-ordination in social action; that the Federal Government should be involved in matters of formulating national policy, legislation, research, planning, education and training in the sphere of social welfare.

These recommendations were accepted in December 1968 by the Military Government. However, in 1970, Dr. Shawky (the then United Nations Regional Adviser on Social Welfare Policy and Training based in Addis Ababa) presented his report on the survey of the administrative and institutional provisions for social development in Nigeria. The Report stated inter-alia:

The Federal Government, including the State Government and voluntary organizations should play complimentary roles in the social development of the country
The types of institutions and training conducive for accelerating social development should be established
Social development responsibilities should be placed in the Concurrent Legislative List.

In late 1970s, the Federal Government embarked on a full task of rebuilding the nation from the effects of the civil war. It encouraged the establishment of

comprehensive social welfare services based on sound professionalism within the twelve created States. In 1972, Decree 9 established among other things, the Social Welfare Section of the Nigeria Prisons in tandem with the United Nations Organization (UNO) minimum treatment of offenders. The Decree established Federal Institutions to ensure continuity in the improvement and transformation in the quality of life of the people of Nigeria. Following the establishment of the Federal Ministry of Social Development, Youths and Sports, separated institutions (the Social Development Division, the National Sports Commission and the National Youth Service Corp Directorate) were brought together in July 1975. Based on this, the social development Decree of 1974 was amended by Decree No. 28 which is the Co-operative and Social Development (Transfer of Emergency Relief Agency of 1976) was promulgated.

History of Social Work in the University of Benin, Edo State Nigeria

The social work unit of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Benin started in 1983/1984 scholastic session with low maintenance Diploma in Social Work (DSW), the accomplishment of the program prompted the presentation of low maintenance Bachelor of Social Work program in 1995/1996 scholarly session. In 2006 a proposition for a division of social work was promoted. This proposition appeared in June 2011 when the office was authoritatively endorsed by the University Senate. With the assistance of Canadian accomplices, Social Work in Nigeria, Project, (SWINP) structures were set up and the division authoritatively took off in July, 2011 as the most up to date office in the Faculty of Social Sciences.

The division conceded its first arrangement of full Time Undergraduates amid the 2011 and 2012 scholastic session. At exhibit, the fifth arrangements of understudies have been conceded. The bureau of Social Work is pointed on social work training that plans graduates who can go to bat for Human Rights and Social Justice and work with populaces impeded by social imbalances and life generalist show which grasps the esteem and standards of social justice and human rights. The program is intended to promote intelligent learning and thusly, underlines classes, gather talks contextual analyses, pretending, and introductions that upgrade the full investment of understudies.

The classroom learning, field rehearse and graduating ventures are the three mainstays of the program through which understudies are required to figure out how to coordinate hypotheses with training in the Nigerian setting. Understudies graduate's identity anticipated that would be able in working at various between proficient settings as a cutting edge social specialist in, not only, regions of neediness end, ladies and youngsters assurance and welfare, youth development general wellbeing especially identified with HIV/AIDS, people group and social improvement in both urban and country territories (Faculty of Social Sciences Prospectus 2017).

Philosophical Development of Social Work

The concept of philosophy is derived from the Greek words philo (love) and Sophia (wisdom). Appropriately, the term philosopher literally means "a lover of wisdom." The qualities that make one a successful lover or philosopher are similar. Successful lovers are never tired of exploring the facets of one another's personality. Likewise, the successful philosopher endlessly desires to explore new ideas and undiscovered dimensions of old ideas. Hence, the quest to understand our friend or to philosophically comprehend our experience is a quest that is always ongoing and never completed. However, this does not mean that we cannot make progress along the way (Lawhead, 2002). Defining philosophy can be likening to fishing in troubled water because it is an uphill-task defining precisely what the

concept entails. However, philosophy grew out of curiosity and wonders - wonders about life, existence, universe, nature, mankind etc. (Aluko, 2000 cited in Dokpesi; Ibiezugbe & Obaro, 2003).

Philosophy is the human attempt to systematically study the most fundamental structures of our entire experience in order to arrive at beliefs that are as conceptually clear, experientially confirmed, and rationally coherent as possible. It is therefore imperative that we understand what it means to say that philosophy is a "human attempt" to take on a task we never can complete. What this means is that we are never finished with philosophy and it is never finished with us and our most dearly held and fundamental ideas are never without the need for modifications and improvements. However, it is imperative to compare the search for philosophical understanding to cultivating a meaningful relationship because the moment two people decided that they have figured out their relationship and do not need to work at it anymore, the relationship has grown stale.

Hence in both relationships and philosophy, there are always new problems to face and old problems to address in new ways (Lawhead, 2002). Again, philosophy can be seen as a critical reflection on our belief system with a view to cleansing it of inconsistencies, contradictions and elements that are inhibitive to the development of the human personality or dignity. It is a critical reflection of human beings on the problems of their existence and essence (Aluko, 2000 cited in Dokpesi; Ibiezugbe & Obaro, 2003).

Philosophy is the study of truths and principles of being, knowledge or conduct. It is also a belief (system of beliefs) accepted as authoritative by members of a group. Thus the concept of philosophy is grounded in the understanding that there are truths and principles of human existence and that these truths are accepted by all human beings. These truths and principle guide the way we conduct ourselves and define what we expect from the people in our social environment. Therefore, philosophy is concerned with the art of making meaning and sense of ourselves, our world and our social environment with its complexities (Lawhead, 2002).

In this context, social work philosophy refers to the underlying causes (or reason) and principles of social work. It refers to the basic ideas behind social work practice. It attempts to provide answers to such vital questions as – what is social work?: (meaning and purposes(s) of social work); how is social work to be practiced?: (ethics or principles of social work); why social work?: (causes or reasons behind social work practice as well as the objectives of social work practice) (Aluko, 2000 cited in Dokpesi; Ibiezugbe & Obaro, 2003). It compels the social workers to pose questions concerning social challenges such as: why so much suffering? How can the suffering be changed? What are the best practice principles of social work that could be applied to transform social conditions?

Theoretical Framework: Social Information Processing Theory
Social Information Processing Theory was propounded in 1992 by Joseph Walther and is concerned about the greater part of the psychological tasks that are sent to create a conduct reaction amid social collaboration of Social Work. The hypothesis looks to see how indigenous and modern Social Work came into the environment. This theory tries to justify the reason why Social Work be practiced at home and taught at schools and college. There are five phases that promotes where data is acquired and process that eventually prompts activity. The stages are encoding, making mental portrayals, reaction getting to, assessment, and establishment. Social Information Processing Theory has suggestions for understanding the importance of Social Work Practice everywhere (Milner 1993, 2003). In particular, researchers have investigated social information with regards

to handling the processes for caring for the vulnerable which Social Work advocates for.

2.   Conclusion

Before the coming of the white man to Nigeria, there was no destitution as there were traditional arrangements put in place to care for those who could not do so due to psychological and environmental factors. The coming of the white man and the subsequent introduction of the capitalist mode of production of goods and services however marked a great departure from the commercial life style that the people of Nigeria were known for. This coupled with the engagement of the able-bodied Nigerians in the World War II led to a disruption in the lives of the people as children of the soldiers who were away fighting in the war became delinquent. Efforts to address the large number of such delinquents led to the establishment of the first set of formal social welfare agencies by private individuals in Nigeria. But social work only became a federal government responsibility in 1974 with the promulgation of Decree No 12 of that year known as the Social Development Decree, 1974. This decree established the Social Development Division as an integral part of the Federal Ministry of Labour.

3.   Recommendations

Based on the review of this paper the following recommendations were made:
It recommended that indigenous knowledge should be upheld.
The value system of the blacks should be determined by the blacks and not with foreign ideology.
Indigenous knowledge should be the foundation for other theories to be used in Social Work practice

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