

Introduction

Traditional African societies of pre-historic times can be said to be of basically three main types when we apply Lenski's criterion for typologising societies, namely Hunting and gathering societies, Pastoral societies and Agricultural societies (Lenski, 1910; Wenke, 1984; and Quale, 1988). Within these three mutually in exclusive categorizations may be found some cultural coincidence and social practices. Culture is extremely important to African communities for recognition as a group (self-identity) and promotion of self-esteem, values and morales within African societies. Both materials and non-materials culture of the people of any given society/area to a large extent exerts influence on the mode of economic production and social practices of the people. This in turn dictates the pattern of social relations, socio-cultural practices and the development of cultural values and virtues that help to promote a stable society. These include the type of the family system, rules of behaviour, the role of individual in the family, types of social interactions, the rule of reciprocity, such as delay reciprocity, otherwise known as the care of the elderly by adult children and extended family members and a host of others in the society.

Human societies are systems of social relationships (Dressler and Carns, 1973). These relationships are determined by the culture of the people. Human beings achieve unity and integration through that culture. This is because, people learn and acquire the culture of their people, including what is expected of them under any given conditions. As a system of social relationships, society serves to fashion those relationships into a functioning whole. The outcome is that we engage in human interaction in characteristic ways that are approved by the consensus of the members of the society and are calculated to promote group solidarity and mutual welfare. We educate the younger ones on the values and virtues of our social and cultural practices, which emphasizes, respect, honour, care and support for the elderly members of the family, respect and reverence for the older members of the community and also teach them some ethical codes in the society.

Perhaps the major feature of a traditional setting as it relates to the aged is the extended family system. The traditional family set up is a close knit social unit which ensures support for each member, thus security as well as the means of meeting their individual needs (Ottenberg and Ottenberge, 1980). The family system is designed as a social and transaction milieu for every stage of life including old age (Fortes, 1949). In many developing countries, such as Nigeria, older people are cared for within the extended family and sometimes within the community at large. In those societies, traditional culture emphasizes respect and assistance to the elderly as a value (Abdulrahman, 1988; ESCAP, 1990).

However, these socio-cultural practices are becoming a dying tradition. Today, the effects of globalization on African social and cultural practices can not be undermined. Currently, the concern for, and discourse on globalization and its attendant effects on all parts of the world preoccupies many scholars of the international system.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this paper is to examine the missing link between the phenomenon of globalization and African Social and Cultural values that emphasize the care and support for the elderly in the African societies and its implication for the development of old age security systems in Nigeria.

Other specific objectives of the paper shall include:

- ◆ An examination of the concept of globalization;
- ◆ A critical examination of African Social and Cultural emphasis, as it affects the care of the elderly;
- ◆ An examination of how to renew call and utilize African cultural values in providing support and improved accessibility to good care for the elderly in the society;
- ◆ A critical examination of the phenomenon of globalization on various cultural emphases;
- ◆ Comparative examination of the status of the Nigerian elderly in the traditional society and the contemporary Nigeria society;

To critically examine some relevant literature and theoretical models that can help explain and understand the changing status of elderly in Nigeria.

African Cultural Values and the Care of the elderly

All desires are according to choice, which is behind motive. There is a scale of preference, which was prompted by choice. This choice is due to values and it is dependent on motives. Values are relative worth attached to objects or behavioural patterns, while norm is a standard of reference in accordance with which an entity or state of an affair is approved or disapproved. Our standard of right and wrong, truth and false, otherwise known as norm is a twin brother of value. People are expected to behave in accordance with values held by the groups to which they belong, and this 'expected' behaviour is nomadic behaviour. Sociology sees man as a nomadic being because man is a product of his cultural and social environment, unlike economics that sees man as a rational being. It would be germane to say at this juncture that, Africans have very rich cultures which, emphasize respect, honour and care for the elderly members of the society. In the course of this presentation therefore, few of the African cultural values that emphasized respect/honour and adequate care/support for the elderly members of the society shall be discussed, while leaving the rest for the future presentations.

African Culture, Care of the elderly and globalization

In the recent past, startling transformations have occurred all over the world and there are a number of important issues, which arise as a result of this transformation and major structural shift in the population. This transformation otherwise known as social change has swept all over the nook and cranny of Africa. However, this transformation affects different people in different ways, depending on sex, location, size of cohort, economic resources (individual, familial and national), norms inherited from the past and individual's live experiences and personality. This has direct consequences for economic security, most especially in many societies, where pensions are paid only to a small proportion of older persons who are eligible because of their employment in the formal sector of the economy.

Today, the care of the frail elderly is becoming increasingly problematic, both in terms of stress placed on the care providers and the caregivers. The mobilization of the appropriate resources of families, agencies and programmes to meet the basic needs of older persons particularly women who had been marginalized, oppressed and even faced with a lot of restrictions in the society are another sources of worry to the family and the policy planners. As life expectancy rises, adult children are more likely to be called on to provide for their elderly parents than these parents were at the same stage of the life cycle, at a time when increasing emphasis on educating one's children, rampant inflation and widespread unemployment of young adults make adequate provisions difficult, therefore increasing the chance of isolation and lack of support for the elderly persons in the society. The resultant effects of the foregoing are the problem of inadequate care and support given and received by the elderly in the society.

Summary and Conclusions

It is unfortunate that the "globalization theory" assumes that all players, men and women, rich and poor, will be affected equally. Furthermore, it also assumes that international trade opportunities open up equally to small scale firms, infant industries and the giant transnational corporations and cartels.

However, the years of African involvement in globalization indicate otherwise because international trade is also to do with people's livelihoods and their most basic social and economic rights. For millions of Africa's poorest people, trade is part of daily life, and a crucial determinant of welfare. When a people's social and economic rights and patterns are affected, their culture is generally affected too. Trade which is built on the unacceptable levels of social inequities to vulnerable communities and groups, or causes global ecological or environmental damage and disregards our obligations to future generations is not conducive to sustainable development.