SOC 314: CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL PROBLEMS

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Unit 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS

The study of social problems is at the heart of sociology as a discipline. The emergence of sociology was to create order to social disorder witnessed during the Industrial and French revolutions as well as the rise in scientism. With problems of poverty, unemployment, housing problems, prostitution, crime and deviance among others led to social dislocation. Sociology therefore emerged to restore order and solve these identified problems. There have been so many definitions of sociology given by different scholars but the most comprehensive definition is the one given by Otite and Ogionwo (1985). According to them, sociology is the study of social aggregates and groups. It studies man and the consequences of his being a member of society, social institutions and their organizations in different societies down the ages, social systems and subsystems and on relationships within groups and organizations. Sociology is especially interested in human interactions and is thus the scientific study of behavior or of social action in human groups". Being without doubt in this definition and so many other definitions given by both classical and contemporary sociology scholars, it could be deduced that the notion of sociology as a discipline is to maintain an orderly society guided by well-patterned interactions among human beings and groups. Sociology becomes more important in the light of major **social changes** which are threatening to man and the society in general. It is these major social changes that had become so complex for man and the society to understand and cope with that end up creating **social problems** in the society. Most of these changes had threatened the fabric of the society thus creating the problem of disorder which in turn affects human interaction and relationships. The early thinkers were worried with the changing patterns of social relationship in Western Europe in particular and the wider world in general. The changes were occasioned by the rise of industrial capitalism, rise of the bourgeoisie and the impact of imperialism on the relationship between religion, political and economic situations. These changes created state of turmoil in most western and American (Germany, France, Britain, America etc.) countries with the revolutions (American, French and industrial revolutions) that took place in these countries. For instance, the industrial revolution which occurred between 1750-1850 produced a wide gulf between the rich and the poor, and to pollute the environment and endanger the ecological balance nature. This major change of industrialization posed several and growing threats of technological tyranny and had also caused new material problems of rapid population growth

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and unpleasant urban conditions, poverty and unemployment. These and numerous social problems become significant to the intellectuals and thinkers of that era. This was how social problems emanated and had continued to be a concern to all thinkers and sociologists till this present time and since then, proffering solutions to the several problems emanating at every point in time have being the preoccupations of sociologists.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the study of social problems cannot be value-free. Defining the social problem to be investigated allows subjectivity to creep in. To identify a phenomenon as a social problem implies that if falls short of some standards.

Learning Outcomes for Unit 1

When you have studied this study unit, you should be able to:

1.1 Define social problem correctly and should be able to correctly differentiate between social problems from personal problems.

1.2 Explain how social problems can be measured. That is, what makes a condition social problem?

1.3 Highlight the approaches to the study of social problem.

1.1 Definition of Social Problem:

Just like sociology and every other sub-disciplines of sociology dealing with human interactions and relationships had being faced with definitional problems, so is the concept of social problem. This is because everybody has different ways in which they view things which is subjective to them. However, there is always a consensus at a particular point most especially on the elements that make up a particular sociological concept. Social problem has been defined in different ways and arising from different sociological perspectives. Let us examine some of them for our understanding of this course.

Social problem is:

- A wide spread in nature and create intense worries that collectively demand the attention and intervention of the leadership and society.

- A condition that disturbs society, prompts social action and intervention and that requires government's response.

- A condition that poses threat to the well-being, survival, continuity, health and prosperity of a society.

Sociologically, social problem is:

- When most people in the society agree that a condition exists that threatens their life and their most cherished values and also agrees that something should be done to remedy that condition, sociologies say that the society has defined that condition as a social problem (Kornblum and Julian, 1995).
- According to Horton, Leslie and Larsons (1991), social problem is a condition affecting a significant number of people in a society in ways considered undesirable and about which it is felt something should be done through collective or social action.

But a rather more inclusive or comprehensive definition by Aderinto (2002) asserts that a social problem exists when a significant number of people or a number of significant people in society perceive an undesirable difference between social ideas and social realities, and believe that this difference can be eliminated by collective and social actions.

Lauer (2002) takes the debate further by distinguishing between a personal problem and a social problem. A personal problem is one whose causes and solutions lie within the individual and the individual's immediate environment; while a social problem is one whose causes and solution lie outside the individual and the immediate environment.

C. Wright Mills made a similar distinction, calling personal problems the "personal troubles of milieu" and social problems the "public issues of social structure" (Mills, 1980).

What is important in all these definitions is that the majority or a significant number of the society's population, or a number of significant (or powerful) people in the society perceive a certain social condition as undesirable or inimical to normal social life, and there is also a willingness for the "abnormal" social condition to be ameliorated to ensure that most of the people adversely affected are helped at public expense to get over it. Emphasis is placed on society recognizing a condition as problematic and then acting through the government for its solution. This is partly a matter of objective knowledge and partly a subjective question of power relations, ideologies, values, and the availability of the means to solve the problem. The situation or condition of individuals or groups is defined as representing need or as social problem and calling for collective, public, social policy or action in the light of different convictions about the

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kind of political, economic and social relations that are desirable in society. However, great inequalities in living conditions and in opportunities, as well as, absolute destitution are held to justify government intervention to ameliorate social problems.

In a nutshell, Social problem is a generic term applied to the range of conditions and aberrant behaviours which are held to be manifestations of social disorganization and to warrant changing via some social engineering. Typically, these problems include many forms of deviant behaviours (such as crime, prostitution, suicide, drug abuse/addiction etc.) and social conflict (such as ethnic tensions, religion tensions, domestic violence, industrial conflict etc.).

In the complex social structure of modern industrial societies, individuals and groups are differently exposed to these hazards, and people occupying different statuses and roles tend to differ in their appraisal of social situations and in their views as to what constitutes a social problem requiring a solution. For this reason, the range of possible social problems is almost infinite, and can include phenomena as diverse as declining standards of literacy and the demise of the work ethic. Similarly, the proposed solutions are also variable, and this too is due to the different interests and values of the various parties involved.

In conclusion, social problem implies a condition that is associated with some sort of disorder, breakdown of norms and values which affects social relationships. However, it is necessary to note that, no existing society can be free of conflicts and conditions that lead to social problems, but they may be necessary for the progress and development of the society.

1.2 Measuring Social Problems

The concept of social problem had been a problematic and controversial subject matter in sociology from time immemorial. This has contributed to the challenge of measuring social problems. For justification to be done to how to measure a social problem there is need to be concerned about some questions:

1. What exactly do we mean by the concept of social problem?
2. What are the things that constitute social problem that make it different from personal/individual problem?

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Implicitly, social problems are distinctively those problems that concern the rules of relationship, formal or informal, which the people of a society establish among themselves. This assertion can be seen in some more advanced definitions of social problems by scholars such as Nwabueze (1992) who defines social problem as object conditions within society that are inimical to the realization of other norms and values for members of society and Merton and Nisbet (1966) who defines it as problems pertaining to human relationships. Problems assume a social dimension when they affect relationships among people and disturb the social order. From Merton and Nisbet (1966) definition, it can be deduced that they distinguish social problems from all other forms of problems because of their link with institutional and normative context.

There are certain ideas which are common to social problems. These ideas are worth explaining for the understanding of the nature of any problem that is social. The first idea is that social problems are problems that must be recognized by the people the problem is affecting. This means that a certain problem might not be regarded as a social problem if the victims of the problem are not aware or takes cognizance of the problem (read more on Karl Marx postulation of class consciousness as key to the rise of revolution). According to Marx, the proletariat/oppressed must be conscious of the oppression and must take conscious efforts at solving the problem.

The second idea of social problem is that the activities of aggrieved groups, civil rights, and women's liberation have made dramatic action to bring their plight to public attention. By the time these plights attracted the attention of the public, it becomes a social problem. While idea to measure what problem becomes a social problem is that the problem must be capable of solution through collective action of members of the society.

In general terms, social problem is different from natural problems. This is because social problems are man-made while natural problems have to do with natural occurrences from God or the so called spiritual being. As it is contained in Horton and Lee (1995) sociology of problems, they assert that "if conditions are regarded as part of a natural order, an unavoidable feature of earthly existence, an act of God, or an inevitable consequence of a brutish nature of man, then

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they are not meant to be social problems. For any problem be 'social' there must be a conscious effort to solve them. However, there is a point of equilibrium between social problem and natural problems. Natural problems such as flooding, whirlwind, tycoons, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes etc. can engender a number of serious social problems. These natural problems may result in mass dislocation of people from their homes and destruction of farmlands and livelihoods which could usher in social problems like famine, poverty and refugee.

Furthermore, social problem can be measured through the understanding of the sociological definition of social problem that suggests both an objective reality and subjective perception. For a social problem to exist there must be a real objective condition such as crime, prostitution, disease etc. Every individual in the society does not have to personally experience a social condition before it can be considered a social problem. A social problem must be absolutely or intrinsically real in that it will possess a harmful quality that can be verified by the experience of some people. An instance is the problem of poverty. You or I don't have to be poor before we can recognize in reality that there are so many people living in poverty. The harmful nature of this experience is universal, existing all over the world. Objective realities of a social problem can be confirmed by the collection of data in the society to affirm the reality of the problem.

Although, the objective reality alone does not make any condition a social problem, also there must be the presence of the subjective perspective. The subjective perspective addresses how a problem becomes defined as a problem. The subjective perspective has to do with the response in people's minds, how people's world is created to be a social creation, originating and evolving through their everyday thoughts and actions. For any problem to be classified as social problem, the people must see the problem as affecting the rules of human relationship and hampering orderly existence in the society. Whether something constitutes a social problem depends on how the people sees it. If people see a condition as a social problem, so be it and if they perceive it as something else, it is that thing they perceive it to be. This idea of subjective perspective is based on the concept of **social constructionism** coined by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966).

The subjective perspective brings us to another way of measuring social problem which has to do with what criminologists call "statistical abnormality" i.e the minority-majority dichotomy. This

dichotomy has to with the numerical estimation of people who see the problem as threatening society which either further gives it a **social status** or being regarded as personal/individual problems or just a problem that affects few people. If a problem is perceived by few that are not "powerful" in the society is regarded as a personal problem but if perceived by the larger numbers of the society, it is a social problem. That means for a condition to be a social problem, it must be perceived by a significant number of the people in the society or must be given a significance status by the influential/powerful people in the society who are few such as the elites, political and religious leaders. For better understanding, let us look at Howard Becker's (1963) labelling theory whose postulation can be adopted to explain this further. He asserted that people create rules and label those who go against the rules as deviants. The rules are created by the upper class for the masses to break them and be labelled deviants. Therefore, problems are labelled to be social problem depending on what the few who occupies the upper class/elite want to make be a social problem. In a nut shell, according to Alhuja (2002) for any condition to be referred to as social problem, the following characteristics should be identified:

1. All social problems are situations which have injurious consequences for society

2. All social problems are deviations from the "ideal" situation

3. All social problems have some common basis of origin

4. All social problems are social and political in origin

5. All social problems are caused by pathological social conditions

6. All social problems are interconnected

7. All social problems are social in their results- they affect all sections of society

8. The responsibility for social problems is social- they require a collective approach for their solution

9. Social problems occur in all societies.

According to Herbert Blumer in Zastrow, 1996, social problems develop in stages. These are:

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1. First Stage: Social problem starts with societal recognition of a problem as a threat to societal peace, harmony, progress and development. At this stage, society defines the problem, the emergence of the leaders and beginning to organize

2. Second Stage: The next stage is social legitimation which takes place when the social problem is recognized by the larger society. That is, crafting an official response.

3. Third Stage: This is stage where the state, institutions and people's resources are mobilized for action. That is, reacting to the official response crafted.

4. Fourth Stage: This is the last stage where strategies, plan or series of plans to deal with the problem are developed and implemented.

In conclusion, there is general agreement among social scientists that the definition of a situation as a social problem is related to the power structure of society (Merton &Nisbet, 1966). Social definitions of social problems have this in common with other processes in society: those occupying strategic positions of authority and power of course carrying more weight than others in defining social problems and therefore, among other things, in deciding social policy direction. Social problems are the product of the process of definition, and social policies are a product of legislation. An understanding of who does the defining of what is defined as social problem and how it is defined, as well as, who shaped legislation and in what ways, is clearly crucial to the sociological perspective on social problems and goes long way on how social problems are measured.

1.3 Approaches to the Study of Social Problems
Introduction

The issues that we define as social problems are complex in nature, and because of the increase in globalization and media outlets, they do not remain confined to one institution or geographic area. For this reason, sociologists must look carefully at a problem to see all its parts. So, how do we begin to approach thinking about social problems? Historically, sociologists use macro or micro paradigms, the theoretical frameworks through which scientists study the world. These include three major paradigms that we will be focusing on in this course: functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism. Sociologists from each school of thought analyze similar issues, but the manner in which they reach conclusions differs. This enriches conversations on

and analysis of social problems. There are three major Paradigms of Sociology to the approach and understanding of social problems.

1.3.1 Functionalism:

This is first and one of the most important paradigms in sociology. It is the paradigm that was later referred to as **structural-functionalism** by the contemporary sociologists. Auguste Comte (1798–1857) was the pioneer who coined the term *sociology* and proposed the basic principles of the functionalism paradigm before other scholars like Emile Durkheim, Talcott Parson and Robert. K. Merton continued on the principles.

Functionalism is a theoretical paradigm that defines society as a system of interrelated parts. It is the paradigm that argues that society is composed of parts that work together to maintain a state of balance. Because functionalism focuses on the entire social system and not just the individual, it considered a **macro** approach to sociological study. If something happens to one component of a social structure, the other components will automatically step in to help restore balance. This shows that every parts of the society have their specific functions which maintain a state of balance within society. If problems occur, society automatically acts in ways to offset these issues. Functionalism treats society as relatively secure; everything that occurs has a purpose in the preservation of stability.

Functionalists believe that the best way to understand society as a whole is to understand how social institutions (such as family, education, religion, law, media, art and the economy) are interrelated. Each institution has an impact, no matter how small it may seem; because everything is connected. An example is when the economy does poorly, it doesn't just affect individual's wallet, and rather it affects the entire society. Companies fold, jobs are lost, rise in unemployment, families go hungry, and children do poorly in school. Because society's balance is reliant on each of its components, functionalism suggests that all social structures must agree on values and norms. These values and norms create society's rules and laws, thus regulating the relationships between institutions.

Let's briefly take a look at a few prominent functionalists from history and their beliefs:

Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) Society can be considered a living organism in which some are more apt to deal with social dynamics and, therefore, adapt better to changes in the environment.

Emile Durkheim (1858–1917) Social integration and social control hold society together. People view themselves as unified wholes, which help them stay within the boundaries of their social structure's rules and laws.

Talcott Parsons (1902–1779) Society is a grand interrelated system in which each individual is instrumental in keeping the system functional. If one individual falters, society as a whole will suffer.

Robert Merton (1910–2003) Every action in society has manifest functions (factors that lead to an expected consequence) and latent functions (factors that lead to an unforeseen or unexpected consequence).

Understanding the foregoing will make the functionalist approach to social problem easier. The functionalists assert that social problems arise as a result of the social pathology that exists within society. Social problems are a product of social disorganization in society which is caused by rapid social change which disrupts the societal norms and values. According to them, when societal norms become weak or are in conflict with each other, society becomes normlessness resulting in various problems that have social dimensions. However, social problems are as well functional in the society because if there is no social problem some certain people in the society won't be employed; their field of profession would not be needed in the society. An example is crime as a social problem. If there is no crime in the society, the police and other security agents would have had nothing to be doing in the society. Therefore, there might not be need for agents of social control.

1.3.2 Conflict Theory

Conflict theory is a theoretical framework that views society as being in a constant struggle over a limited amount of resources. The origin of this paradigm can be traced to the works of Karl Marx (1818-1883). The perspective enjoys the sympathy of scholars within the third world and global south. Similar to functionalism, this theory also uses a **macro** approach because it deals with the interaction of multiple groups fighting to gain power. Conflicts theorists view the problems in society as being the uneven outcome of competition among various interests and

groups for power and limited resources. This theory explains the various aspects of the social world by looking at which groups have power and benefit from a particular social arrangement. This struggle takes many forms, often pitting the elite groups, with little concern for general social interests, against less powerful but directly affected people.

Marx suggested that all societies go through stages of economic development creating the capitalist economy which creates two classes of people- the **bourgeoisie** (owners of capital and means of production) and the **proletariat** (the labors who gives their service to the owners to earn wages). This makes the conflict theorists examine how and why the rift between the rich and the poor affects the standard of living such as: quality of education, health care, and living conditions of those groups. The wealthy can afford better housing and tend to live near people of the same status. Because of this, the values of these homes increase, and the poor who originally lived there are forced into separate areas. It's no surprise that individuals who can afford to live in more expensive neighborhoods can also afford better schools for their children, thereby increasing the chances that their offspring will also be more successful.

Conflict theorists suggest that once inequality begins to take root, those at the top are unlikely to push for social change. This is because the elite set standards and rules that benefit themselves, not the individuals or groups below them. These standards also help keep the wealthy and powerful in prominent positions.

However, the Marxian theory of class conflict alone cannot explain all kinds of social problems that occur around us. They are also value conflict theorists who define social problems as "conditions that are incompatible with group values" (Rubington & Weinberg, 1971). According to value conflict theory, social problem occur when groups with different values meet and compete. Such problems are normal, since in a complex society, there are many groups whose interests and values are bound to differ and/or conflict. From the value conflict viewpoint, many social problems need to be understood in terms of which groups hold which values and have the power to enforce them against the wishes of other groups.

Thus, the conflict theory of class-value conflict can be a powerful tool for analyzing contemporary social problems in Nigeria, such as, criminality, corruption, poverty, inequalities

of opportunities and quality of life, and social conflict such as, class, value, ethnic and communal, religious, political, industrial and labor conflicts.

Both theories theory can be applied to many institutions, not just social class. Both theorists apply their principles to age, gender, race, religion and any social construct in which inequality can be viewed as a social problem.

Take a look at the list below to see the different ways in which conflict theorists approach this paradigm. These will summarize what the conflict paradigm stands for.

Harriet Martineau (1802–1876) A society's actions are often quite different from the values expressed by that society. For example, despite boasts of freedom and democracy in the United States, only men had the right to vote until 1920.

Karl Marx (1818–1883) Capitalism breeds conflict between the rich and the poor. The pursuit of wealth corrupts society and will ultimately destroy it. Economic power should not lie in the hands of the elite few, but in the hands of all people.

William. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963) Social equality is impossible to achieve in corrupt social systems. The past strongly influences the present, such as the connection between past and present discrimination against African Americans and all disadvantaged groups.

John Bellamy Foster (1953–Present) Social unrest is a result of unequal distribution of power and wealth. Capitalism cannot continue as it is; the process of seeking short-term rewards and avoiding long-term consequences must be stopped if society is to continue.

Understanding the foregoing, it brings us to the understanding of the two general positions of conflict theories in approaching social problems.

1. Marxist theory focus on social conflict as a result of economic inequalities
2. Non-Marxist theory which consider social conflict as a result of competing values and interests among social groups.

Thus, according to the conflict approach, social problems arise from economic and class inequalities inherent in a capitalistic system and the opposing interests and values among social groups in the society. An example of this is politics in Nigeria that has become a vehicle to force the desires and decisions of a few on the majority through the use of ballot box. How the power is achieved is less concerned to them as long as the minority interest is protected and promoted through homogenic seizure and control of state apparatuses which they will latter use to instigate political violence to enforce their selfish desire on the general interest of the majority. All these

situations- political violence, consciousness of the majority, opposing interest of the dominant groups will eventually lead to social problem and chaos in the society.

1.3.3 Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is a theoretical framework that focuses on how individual interactions between people influence their behavior and how these interactions can impact society. Unlike functionalism and conflict theory, this paradigm is a **micro** approach because it deals with individuals, not groups or institutions. Symbolic interactionists analyze how social interactions influence, create, and sustain human relationships. They believe that symbols such as body language, words, gestures, and images affect communication. Humans interact with one another according to the meanings of these symbols. How did you first learn your name? Early on in your life your parents called you something, and you learned to respond to it. Now if someone calls you by another name, you are unlikely to even move your head. Why? Because somewhere in your mind, you use this symbol to help form your sense of self. It is this identity that you carry with you your entire life and use in interactions with others to create a social world. We also learn the meaning behind symbols within social contexts. For example, a picture of a revolutionist like Femi Falanain Lagos state probably has little or no meaning to you, whereas a picture of Shakarau in sambisa forest might bring forth thoughts of "freedom", "terrorism" and "rebellion". Despite both men being revolutionary leaders, your cultural context influences how you view each picture.

Take a look at the list below to see the different ways in which Interactionists approach this paradigm in a brief and succinct way.

George Herbert Mead (1863–1931) Society is made up of symbols that teach us to understand the world. We use these symbols to develop a sense of self, or identity. We then take this identity into the world to interact with other identities to create society.

Herbert Blumer (1900–1987) An individual's behavior depends on the meanings we have already created through experience and interaction. We use an interpretive process to handle and alter these meanings.

Erving Goffman (1922–1982) Social interactions are the building blocks of society. Individuals alter their behavior constantly, requiring a complex series of actions and reactions.

Howard Becker (1928–Present) Social interactions can lead to self-fulfilling prophecies that limit a person's outcomes. We place labels on people in society; individuals then feel as though they must embody those labels.

Symbolic interactionists or simply called Interactionists focus on how people subjectively define reality. The interactionists approached social problems by examining how values, shared expectations and perceptions are applicable to social problems in the society. The interactionists assert that social problems in the society can be interpreted to be so based on the values of the people, their individual perceptions and expectations. The theories of the Interactionists that can explain this assertion better are:

1. Labelling theory by Howard S. Becker (1963). This theory states that a social condition or group is viewed as problematic if it is labelled as such. In other word, the theory asserts that, social groups create deviance, first by making rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and secondly, by applying those rules to particular people and labelling them as deviants. Exact thing applies to social problems. Social problems are labelled depending on what the people most in the upper class feel about them. They are likely to label a condition which directly affects them as social problem much faster than the way will respond to those affecting the lower class. Nigeria a case study.

2. Social constructionism which argues that reality is socially constructed by individuals who interpret the social world around them.

In conclusion, Interactionists paradigm contends that a condition must be defined or recognized as a social problem for it to be a social problem.

Other emerging paradigms exist apart from the three mentioned above. They are the modern approaches to understanding social problems. These are: feminist theory, exchange theory and environmental theory.

1.3.4 Theoretical Harmonization

It is possible to consider social problems within the theoretical framework that adopts a continuum of social problems ranging from those which are primarily conflicts of moral values to those which are primarily conflicts of economic interest. These are ideal types and though, all social problems will involve conflict of both moral values and economic interest, some will be

more easily placed at one end of continuum than the other. Other problems will belong to middle part of the continuum, and for some others, there will be disagreement as to their proper classification. Functionalist, conflict and interactionist theories differ in the way they view social problems. Functionalist theories of society tend to consider behaviour, which depart from conventional standards as problematic, for not only do they assume a uniformity in the values and norms of society, but they also consider that such behaviour as is generally accepted is best. Conflict and interactionist theories of society, on the other hand, accept greater cultural diversity in society and they tend to question the legitimacy of generally accepted form of behaviour. Seen from the conflict and interactionist perspective, concern for social problem is tantamount to concern about the social system itself.

At the other end of the continuum are those problems which are produced primarily by conflicts between value systems of the particular group concerned and of the rest of society. Abortion for example involves conflict of moral values and behaviour between those who accept abortion and those who do not. At the same end of the continuum is another group of social problems which are the result of physical or mental malfunctioning which challenges the ethical value system of society, for example, deafness, blindness, mental handicap and so on. They are the product not of conflicts between the value system of the particular group and rest of the society but rather the conflict between the problematic situation of the group in question and social ethical value system. The inability of such groups to live a normal life without help and the ability of their fellow citizens, if they so wish, to "normalize" their lives, make their situations challenging to certain ethical values.

Many social problems will be plotted in the continuum for they involve conflicts of economic interests and value system fairly equally. The approach to social problems being suggested also recognizes the existence of conflicting value systems and forms of behaviour without necessarily apportioning blame and moral worthlessness. It is a more open and realistic approach to social problems involving conflict of value systems and it may perhaps lead to a more understanding attitude toward groups whose value systems and behaviour are different from those of the majority in society. It goes without saying, however, that even in a socially just and egalitarian society, where economic domination and exploitation will either cease or substantially reduced,

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there will be problem of value conflict, and social problem of this type are part and parcel of life in society (George & Wilding, 1977).

Summary of Unit

In Unit 1, you have learned that:

1. Social problem is a social condition that creates a shared belief that such problems pose a threat to the peaceful existence or co-existence of a community or society and give everyone within that society a cause to do something about them collectively.

2. Social problem can be measured through certain ideas that are common to them-

   - The problems must be recognized by the people it affects and the plight of the groups it affects must be brought to public attention

   - Can also be measured through the sociological definition of social problem which contains the objective reality and subjective perspective of social problem.

3. There are so many approaches to the study of social problem. But the purpose of this study, we will deal with the most general ones that are: Functionalism/Structural-functionalism, Conflict theory and Symbolic Interactionism or simply called Interactionist perspective. Other approaches which are modern are Feminism, Exchange theory and Environmental theories.

4. Both the Functionalist and Conflict perspectives deal with what is called macro sociology which means studying social problems in the society from the larger scale while the Interactionists deal with micro sociology which means studying social problem from individuals' interactions and relationships to interpret social problems in the society.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Unit 1

Since this study session had been completed, you can now assess how well you have achieved its learning outcomes by answering the questions below. You can check your answers with the notes on the Self-Assessment Questions at the end of the module.

SAQ 1.1 (tests learning outcome 1.1)

How can social problem correctly be defined?

SAQ 1.2 (tests learning outcome 1.2)

State ways the concept of social problem can be measured.

SAQ 1.3 (tests learning outcome 1.3)

What are the approaches to social problem?

Notes on the Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Unit 1

SAQ 1.1: Aderinto (2002) gives a more inclusive or comprehensive definition of social problem by asserting that a social problem exists when a significant number of people or a number of significant people in society perceive an undesirable difference between social ideas and social realities, and believe that this difference can be eliminated by collective and social actions.

SAQ 1.2: For social problem to be measured, there are certain ideas that are to be considered.The first idea is that social problems are problems that must be recognized by the people the problem is affecting and the victims of the problem must be conscious of the problem as well as taken conscious efforts at solving the problem. The second idea of social problem is that the activities of aggrieved groups, civil rights, and women's liberation have made dramatic action to bring their plight to public attention. By the time these plights attracted the attention of the public, it becomes a social problem. While idea to measure what problem becomes a social problem is that the problem must be capable of solution through collective action of members of the society.

Furthermore, social problem can also be measured through the understanding of the sociological definition of social problem that suggests both an objective reality and subjective perception. For a social problem to exist there must be a real objective condition such as crime, prostitution, disease etc. A social problem must be absolutely or intrinsically real in that it will possess a harmful quality that can be verified by the experience of some people. Objective realities of a social problem can be confirmed by the collection of data in the society to affirm the reality of the problem.Although, the objective reality alone does not make any condition a social problem, also there must be the presence of the subjective perspective which addresses how a problem becomes defined as a problem. The subjective perspective has to do with the response in people's minds, how people's world is created to be a social creation, originating and evolving

through their everyday thoughts and actions. This idea of subjective perspective is based on the concept of **social constructionism** coined by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966).

The subjective perspective brings us to another way of measuring social problem which has to do with numerical estimation of people who see the problem as threatening society which either further gives it a **social status** or being regarded as personal/individual problems or just a problem that affects few people. If a problem is perceived by few that are not "powerful" in the society is regarded as a personal problem but if perceived by the larger numbers of the society, it is a social problem. That means for a condition to be a social problem, it must be perceived by a significant number of the people in the society or must be given a significance status by the influential/powerful people in the society who are few such as the elites, political and religious leaders.

SAQ 1.3: Functionalism/Structural-functionalism approachis a macro perspective of sociology which deals with order in the society. The theorists assert that every society is held together by a set of social institutions, each of which has a specific role function in society. Social problem arouse in the society when any of the social institutions fails to play its specific role and was not quickly attended to by the society collectively. The Functionalists asked questions like: how does the problem originate from the social structure? How does the problem reflect changes among social institutions and structures? And what are the functions and dysfunctions of the problem?

Conflict/Value-Conflict approach is also a macro perspective of sociology just like the functionalism approach, but they differ in what they deal with in the society. The conflict approach deals with conflict in the society. The conflict theorists assert that society is held by power and coercion. Conflict and inequality are inherent in the social structure. The conflict theorists ask questions like: how does the problem originate from the competition between groups and from the social structure itself? And what groups are in competition and why are they in competition?

Symbolic Interactionism/Interactionist approach differs entirely from the aforementioned approaches. The Interactionist approach is micro sociological perspective which deals with interactions among individuals and the meaning attached to objects through their interactions. The Interactionists assert that society is created through social interaction. They asked questions like: how is the problem socially constructed and defined? How is problem behavior learned through interaction? And how is the problem labeled by those concerned about it?

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Unit 2: CAUSES OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Introduction

There is no single society where social problem is welcomed because problems create disharmony and maladjustment in the society, yet the problems continue to exist. What are the main causes of social problem, which has been the question posed by many sociologists are yet to get answer, and this had made the problems found no solution and every attempts made in this regard are yet to be fruitful. The reason for this is that sociologists are yet to pinpoint a single cause responsible for creation of the problems. Society differs and what may be responsible under certain circumstances may not be under certain other circumstances and so on. In fact in actual practice it hasbeen found difficult to find out a single cause responsible for creating social problem. But some of the causes may be attached to some factors ranging from historical, sociological to psychological factors. To further streamline these factors they can be further subdivided into:

1. Historical factors which has to do with major changes in the society
2. Sociological factors which has to do with social disorganization and elements of social structure and culture
3. Psychological factors which has to do with personality traits of individuals.

Learning Outcomes for Unit 2

When you have studied this unit, you should be able to:

2.1 Define and use correctly the key words in **bold**

2.2 Describe the concept of social change

2.3 Explain historical process of social problem in line with social change

2.4 Explain the factors that causes social problems in the society

2.1 Historical Factors That Causes Social Problems:

The historical factors emphasis the changes that have occurred in the society. These changes altered the traditional way of doing things and instead, entrenched new modern ways of life. For better understanding the historical factors of social problems, it is important to discussin detail

what **social change**is because it is the bases of historical antecedent. Conflict between the institutional change, norms and values always lead to social problem.

Social change can be described as the transformation in social structure overtime. Also, social change can be defined as the alteration and modifications which all social institutions or some parts of them undergo over time in the process of communication and interaction. According to Laur (1977), social change is the alteration in the social phenomena at various levels of human life from individual to the global. Boudon (1986) refers to social change as an inclusive concept that refers to alterations in social phenomena at various levels from individual to the global. Giddens (1989) defines social change as the modification of basic institutions during a specific period. Charles Harper (1998) defines social change as the significant alteration of social structure and cultural patterns through time.

It should be noted that it is quite difficult to draw boundaries between categories of social change. Also, some of the categories of change are limited by time and space. For instance, a progressive change to a particular group of people may be retrogressive to another group within the same social structure. These categories of change were summarised by Macionis (2003) as the four main characteristics of social change:

1. Change happens everywhere but the rate varies from one location to the other. For instance the rate of change in the developed countries would be faster than those of developing countries as a result of unequal exposure and access to information technology.
2. Social change is sometimes intentional but often unplanned. For example, the airplane was invented to make people travel far distances at very short period of time. However, it was not realised that this means of transportation would make family members spread all over the globe because it is quite easy to return for visits. Also, the numerous plane crashes and death related to airplanes were not envisaged.
3. Social change often generates controversy: For example, the privatization of government owned companies such as Nigeria Telecommunication (NITEL), had been generating controversies between labor and the administrators of the company.

4. Some changes matter more than others. For instance, the transition from military to civil rule is more important than the court verdict over the election of some politicians to power.

Furthermore, it is quite clear that social change takes place within the social structure in terms of modification and alteration. The world, therefore, is aware of the fact that the society is never static, and that social, political, cultural, and economic changes are recurrent. It is however, pertinent to briefly but succinctly discuss the kinds of change that take place in every society. Nwabueze (1988) identifies four kinds of change: normative change, change in social values, Institutional change, and Change of actors/personnels.

- Normative change:

A social norm can be regarded as a standard that sets limitation in form of guiding principles for the behavior, interpersonal and inter-group interactional situations of members of a particular group of people. The function of a social norm is to coordinate people's expectations in interaction that possess multiple balance of opposing forces of influence (Chirot, 1994). It is used to govern a wide range of phenomena such as contracts, property rights, bargains, justice, governance, and administration. However, norms can be active (attracts punishment if deviated from it) or passive (might not attract punishment because it goes unnoticed most times).

Change in norms might be as a result of change in other parts of the social structure (e.g. the introduction of the Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) by the Lagos State Government brought back the 'queue culture' at bus terminus),or might bring about the establishment of institutions to give orientation and enforce the new norms (e.g. the 'War Against Indiscipline' (WAI) programme introduced in 1984 by the Buhari-Idiagbon regime was to enforce orderliness, dedication to work and work ethics, war against corruption and economic sabotage, patriotism and nationalism. WAI covers the activities of the 'Kick Against Indiscipline' (KAI) programme of Lagos State, the anticorruption crusade of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC), Rebranding Nigeria Programme by the National Orientation Agency (NOA) under the Federal Ministry of Information, etc. These government bodies were established in order to institutionalise new norms and bring perpetrators to trial before tribunal and law courts).

- Change in Social Values:

Social values are inherent in all social institutions and societies. It is defined as the conception or standard by which things are compared, approved or disapproved, desirable and undesirable, more or less correct, more or less honourable (Ogionwo and Otite, 2006). Social values are conception or standards, cultural or personal by which things are compared and approved or disapproved relative to one another, held to be relatively desirable or undesirable, more meritorious or less, more or less concrete. Therefore, social value is what a society, group or sub-group hold with high esteem.Social values may emanate from ideas, actions, feelings, qualities, objectives, and expectations of individuals or groups.

- Institutional Change:

It is a known fact that the society comprises social institutions which function together for the existence of that society. However, these institutions cannot operate effectively without norms and values. This is because all social institutions have clearly stated values guided by specific interactional norms and best practices.

As the society develops, institutional change occurs most often and a change in one is most likely to affect at least one other institution. For example, the marriage institution had gone through various transitions due to westernisation of the cultural patterns in Nigeria. Polygamy is fading away rapidly while monogamy and single parenting is becoming order of the day which in turn having effects on the family size.

- Change of Personnel/Actor:

Social institutions and the society at large cannot function effectively without individuals occupying specific positions and carrying out specific roles in relation to specific norms and values as regards the hierarchical structure of the social institutions. Every individual actor has personal notions, ideas, attitude, policy, and ideologies which may likely affect his/her disposition and leadership qualities and styles, as such, personal values and aspirations may reflect on quality of service delivery of the individual. A change of actor might bring about new norms, values, policy and service delivery. For instance, military administrations make use of decrees as the guiding principles/laws while the civilian regimes make use of the constitution put

together and subjected to amendments by the legislative arms of government, as the case may require.

Understanding the foregoing, it can be deduced that, the four kinds of social change are interdependence. None of them could operate aloneor in isolation. They depend on each other to balance any alteration that occurs in the society. For any normative change to occur there must be values that are uphold by the society and vice versa. An influential individual or group may successfully induce its value into the social structure, thereby replacing the old values. When these norms and social values are uphold standardly, that will determine what will happen during the process of institutional change and the actor/personnel that will lead the change.

All these kinds of changes have to operate interconnectedly for any change that occurs not to have negative implication on the social structure that could lead to social problems. For instance, if old values are meant to be changed with new values by influential people in the society without considering a perfect actor that could lead the change process and not planning towards necessary changes that could occur to other institutions in the society, this will definitely create social problem.

All these kinds of changes had taken place in Nigeria and had altered the traditional ways of doing things and instead, encroach modern ways of life. These modern ways had neglected and eliminated many values that are cherished by the Nigerians and this had caused infringement on the social structures at different levels. These infringements are what had led to several kinds of social problems in Nigeria. For instance, the marriage institution and kinship system had gone through various transitions due to westernization of the cultural patterns and the advent of industrialization in Nigeria. The prerequisite for marriage such as the involvement of spouses' families, payment of bride price, check on family background and religion are more often than not taken lightly. Wedding ceremonies are often conducted without seeking consent from parents and even when that is done, the involvement of extended family may not be necessary. In lieu of this, the payment of bride price and religious considerations are affected. The payment of bride price is no longer compulsory as it was in the past where every requirement stated for wedding must be completed before ceremonies were conducted. The number of people involved in

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marriage had also been affected. Monogamy, single parenting and separate families are the order of the day while polygamy is fading away rapidly which in turn affects family size and family social ties. All these had led to the high increase in divorce and children out of wedlock and posing a serious threat to the social structure of the Nigeria society. Also, with the advent of industrialization and consequent growth of cities, all structures and the kinship system that kept people together in the pre-industrialized days were weakened. Many people began to move to the cities in search of jobs and better conditions, and the emphasis on kin protection became lowered with the influx of people in to cities. Because of the increasing urban population and the complexities inherent in it, the attendant problems of poverty, public security, unemployment etc. emerged in urban areas. This means that industrialization, urbanization, mobility, heterogeneity and all the changes that accompanied these historical processes have been seen as historical factors which worked to precipitate social problems in Nigeria. In another words therefore, changes in a particular social institution will effect changes in at least one of the other social institutions and might end up creating social problem.In a nut shell, social problem arises when there is conflict between institutional change, norms and values of the society.Therefore, social problem is part of the price of social change.

2.2 Sociological Factors

The sociological factors of social problems causation can best be illustrated through the understanding of the social disorganization perspectives and the elements of social structure and culture.

2.2.1 Social Disorganization:

Social disorganization evolved from different theoretical traditions. It proposes that social order, stability and integration are conducive for conformity, while disorder and malintegration are conducive to crime and deviance. The theory asserts that a social system is described as socially organized and integrated if there is an internal consensus on its norms and values, a strong cohesion exists among its members, and social interaction proceeds in an orderly manner. Conversely, the system is described as disorganized if there is a disruption in its social cohesion or integration, a breakdown in social control or malalignment among the elements that make the society.

To further describe the social disorganization theory, let us take a look at Durkheim and Merton's illustration of the perspective.

According to Durkheim, the problems of modern man were a matter of maladjustment. It was of utmost importance, therefore, to develop for modern man an appropriate morality- a morality that will enable him to adjust happily to the modern conditions. Let us take Durkheim's suicide as an example. In studying suicide, Durkheim was in effect centering attention on problems of the upper and middle classes and of the liberal professions, for suicide was undeniably exceptional frequent in the highest class of the society (Zeitlin, 1968). To Durkheim, modern man kills himself primarily because of two conditions: the loss of cohesion in modern society and the absence of the appropriate moral norms by which to orientate himself. These conditions give man too great comfort which turns a man against himself. For Robert K. Merton who also built his postulation upon Durkheim's ideas, he investigated deviance in the society. He asserted that deviant behavior can be traced to the social structure of any society. That explanation assumes that **culture conflict** is the principal source of crime. According to Merton (1968), the structure of the society is composed on various elements, and in his analysis, the two most important ones are cultural defined goals, which are objectively define as legitimate for everyone to achieve; and the regulatory norms, which define and control the means to achieve the cultural defined goals. The conclusion here is that deviant behavior crops up as the consequence of the gap created between the culturally prescribed aspirations, and socially acceptable avenues for realizing those aspirations.

What is meant to be understood from the two theorists' propositions is that, the less there exists solidarity, cohesion or integration within a group, community or society, the higher there will the rate of deviance and crime. These show the relationship between the plight of the apparently isolated individual and the overall social context in which he or she lives, as a result of which social problems arise.

2.2.2 Elements of Social Structure and Culture:

Although society surrounds us and permeates our lives, it is difficult to "see" society. By thinking of society in terms of a picture or image, however, we can visualize society and

therefore better understand it. Imagine that society is a coin with two sides: on one side is the structure of society and on the other is the culture of society. Although each "side" is distinct, both are inseparable from the whole. By looking at the various elements of social structure and culture, we can better understand some root causes of social problems.

a. Elements of Social Structure

The structure of society refers to the way society is organized. Society is organized into different parts: institutions, social groups, statuses, and roles.

- **Institutions:** An institution is an established and enduring pattern of social relationships. The five traditional institutions are family, religion, politics, economics, and education. Also some other social institutions, such as science and technology, mass media, medicine, sport, and the military, also play important roles in modern society.

   Many social problems are generated by inadequacies in various institutions. For example, unemployment may be influenced by the educational institution's failure to prepare individuals for the job market and by alterations in the structure of the economic institution.

- **Social Groups:** Institutions are made up of social groups. A **social group** is defined as two or more people who have a common identity, interact, and form a social relationship. For example, the family in which you were reared is a social group that is part of the family institution. The religious association to which you may belong is a social group that is part of the religious institution.

   Social groups may be categorized as primary or secondary. **Primary groups**, which tend to involve small numbers of individuals, are characterized by intimate and informal interaction. Families and friends are examples of primary groups. **Secondary groups**, which may involve small or large numbers of individuals, are task-oriented and characterized by impersonal and formal interaction. Examples of secondary groups include employers and their employees and clerks and their customers.

- **Status:** Just as institutions consist of social groups, social groups consist of statuses. A status is a position a person occupies within a social group. The statuses we occupy largely define our social identity. The statuses in a family may consist of mother, father, stepmother, stepfather, wife, husband, child, and so on. Statuses may be either ascribed or achieved. An **ascribed status** is one that society assigns to an individual on the basis of factors over which the individual has no control. For example, we have no control over the sex, race, ethnic background, and socioeconomic status into which we are born. Similarly, we are assigned the status of "child," "teenager," "adult," or "senior citizen" on the basis of age which we do not choose or control.

  An **achieved status** is assigned on the basis of some characteristic or behavior over which the individual has some control. Whether or not you achieve the status of college graduate, spouse, parent, bank president, or prison inmate depends largely on your own efforts, behavior, and choices. One's ascribed statuses may affect the likelihood of achieving other statuses, however. For example, if you are born into a poor socioeconomic status you may find it more difficult to achieve the status of "college graduate" because of the high cost of a college education.

  Every individual has numerous statuses simultaneously. You may be a student, parent, tutor, volunteer fundraiser, female, and Hispanic. A person's **master status** is the status that is considered the most significant in a person's social identity. Typically, a person's occupational status is regarded as his or her master status. If you are a full-time student, your master status is likely to be "student."

- **Roles:** Every status is associated with many **roles**, or the set of rights, obligations, and expectations associated with a status. Roles guide our behavior and allow us to predict the behavior of others. As a student, you are expected to attend class, listen and take notes, study for tests, and complete assignments. Because you know what the role of theteacher involves, you can predict that your teacher will lecture, give exams, and assign grades based on your performance on tests.

A single status involves more than one role. For example, the status of prison inmate includes one role for interacting with prison guards and another role for interacting with other prison inmates. Similarly, the status of nurse involves different roles for interacting with physicians and with patients.

b. Elements of Culture

Whereas social structure refers to the organization of society, culture refers to the meanings and ways of life that characterize a society. The elements of culture include beliefs, values, norms, sanctions, and symbols.

- **Beliefs:** Beliefs refer to definitions and explanations about what is assumed to be true. The belief of an individual or group influence whether that individual or group views a particular social condition as a social problem. Does secondhand smoke harm nonsmokers? Are nuclear power plants safe? Does violence in movies and on television lead to increase aggression in children? Our beliefs regarding these issues influence whether we view the issues as social problems. Beliefs not only influence how a social condition is interpreted, they also influence the existence of the condition itself. For example, men who believe that when a woman says "no," she really means "yes" or "maybe" are more likely to commit rape and sexual assault than men who do not have these beliefs (Frank, 1991).

- **Values**: Values are social agreements about what is considered good and bad, right and wrong, desirable and undesirable. Frequently, social conditions are viewed as social problems when the conditions are incompatible with or contradict closely held values. For example, poverty and homelessness violates the value of human welfare; crime contradicts the values of honesty, private property, and nonviolence; racism, sexism, and heterosexism violate the values of equality and fairness.

- **Norms and Sanctions:** Norms are socially defined rules of behavior. Norms serve as guidelines for our behavior and for our expectations of the behavior of others.

  There are three types of norms: folkways, laws, and mores. **Folkways** refer to the customs and manners of society. In many segments of our society, it is customary to shake hands when being introduced to a new acquaintance, to say "excuse me" after

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sneezing, and to give presents to family and friends on their birthdays. Although no laws require us to do these things, we are expected to do them because they are part of the cultural traditions, or folkways, of the society in which we live.

- **Laws** are norms that are formalized and backed by political authority. A person who eats food out of a public garbage container is violating a folkway; no law prohibits this behavior. However, throwing trash onto a public street is considered littering and is against the law.

Some norms, called **mores**, have a moral basis. Violations of mores may produce shock, horror, and moral indignation. Both littering and child sexual abuse are violations of law, but child sexual abuse is also a violation of our mores because we view such behavior as immoral.

All norms are associated with **sanctions**, or social consequences for conforming to or violating norms. When we conform to a social norm, we may be rewarded by a positive sanction. These may range from an approving smile to a public ceremony in our honor. When we violate a social norm, we may be punished by a negative sanction, which may range from a disapproving look to the death penalty or life in prison. Most sanctions are spontaneous expressions of approval or disapproval by groups and individuals-these are referred to as informal sanctions. Sanctions that are carried out according to some recognized or formal procedure are referred to as formal sanctions. Types of sanctions, then, include positive informal sanctions, positive formal sanctions, negative informal sanctions, and negative formal sanctions (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Types and Examples of Sanctions		
	Positive	**Negative**
Informal	Being praised by one's neighbors for organizing a neighborhood recycling program.	Being criticized by one's neighbors for refusing to participate in the neighborhood recycling program.
Formal	Being granted a citizen award for organizing a neighborhood	Being fined by the city for failing to dispose of trash properly.

	recycling program.	

(Mooney, Knox, & Schacht, 2000)

- **Symbols:** A symbol is something that represents something else. Without symbols, we could not communicate with each other or live as social beings.

  The symbols of a culture include language, gestures, and objects whose meaning is commonly understood by the members of society. In our society, if a leave is put on the windscreen of a vehicle, means a corpse is being carried in that vehicle to somewhere, a red cloth tied to an object means danger. In America, a red ribbon tied around a car antenna symbolizes Mothers Against Drunk Driving, a peace sign symbolizes the value of nonviolence, and a white hooded robe symbolizes the Ku Klux Klan. Sometimes people attach different meanings to the same symbol. The Confederate flag is a symbol of Southern pride to some, a symbol of racial bigotry to others.

The elements of the social structure and culture just discussed play a central role in the creation, maintenance, and social response to various social problems. One of the goals of taking a course in social problems is to develop an awareness of how the elements of social structure and culture contribute to social problems. Sociologists refer to this awareness as the **"sociological imagination" or "sociological mindfulness."**

2.3 The Psychological factors:

As is it like all psychological explanations, the psychological factors emphasize differing personality traits of individuals which are expressed in some form of anti-social behavior. This explains why two people who are both reared in the same family and cultural environment may behave differently. These special emotional needs, growing out of certain kinds of emotional development, often play a role in an individual's involvement in a given social problem. Sigmund Freud's (1949) distinction of parts of the human mind- **id** (the original impulses of human mind that is barbaric and ever-demanding pleasure seeking), **super ego** (the part of the mind that represents the moral codes of the society that is embedded in the level of socialization of individual) and the **ego** (the part of human mind that plays the role of an intermediary between

the id and super ego and manifest whatever is decided in the human mind) is instructive in this regard.

Summary of Unit 2

In Unit 2, you have learned that:

1. In general terms, there is no single cause of social problem. Causes of social problem differ from society to society.

2. Some of the highlighted causes of social problem can be: major social changes that occurred to the society's historical antecedent, sociological factors and psychological factors.

3. There are four kinds of social change- normative change, change in social values, institutional change and change in actors.

4. Sociological factors that could create social problem occurs through social disorganization in the society, elements of social structure (which comprises of institutions, social groups, social statuses and social roles) and elements of culture (which comprises of beliefs, values, norms and sanctions, Laws and symbols).

5. The psychological factor that creates social problem occurs through individual personality traits which are expressed in some form of anti-social behavior. This can be linked to Freud's analysis of parts of human mind- id, superego and ego.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Unit 2

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning Outcomes by answering these questions. You can check your answers with the notes on the Self-Assessment Questions at the end of the module.

SAQ 2.1 (tests learning outcome 2.1)

What are the causes of social problems?

SAQ 2.2 (tests learning outcome 2.2)

What is social change and how does it cause a social problem?

SAQ 2.3 (tests learning outcome 2.3)

What is Durkheim and Merton's postulations on social disorganization perspective as a cause of social problem?

SAQ 2.4 (tests learning outcome 2.4)

What are the elements of social structure and culture that causes social problem?

Notes on the Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Unit 2

SAQ 2.1: The causes of social problem include major social change in historical antecedent of a society, social disorganization, elements of social structure and culture and psychological factors.

SAQ 2.2: Social change is the alteration, transformation and modification in the social structure of a particular the society over time. A changing society inevitably develops problems, either the conditions themselves change and become unacceptable or the society's changing values define an old condition as no longer tolerable. Social problem is part of the price of social change.

SAQ 2.3: According to Durkheim, the problems of modern man were a matter of maladjustment and the morality that will enable such modern man to adjust happily to the modern conditions were not developed, while for Merton, the consequences of gap that is created between the culturally prescribed aspirations and the socially acceptable avenues for realizing those aspirations all lead to social disorganization that creates social problems.

SAQ 2.4: Elements of social structure are- institutions, social groups, social statuses and social roles, while elements of culture includes- beliefs, values, norms and sanctions, laws and symbols.

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Unit 3: Major Social Problems in Nigeria

Introduction

Most people will no doubt agree that we can readily identify the current campaigns against so many kinds of social problems such as human trafficking andprostitution, child trafficking and labor, harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, early marriage,widow inheritance, gender discrimination, HIV/AIDS, endemic and deepening corruption, bad governance, abusivesecurity forces, poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, injustice, minority marginalization, growing inequalities between the rich and poor, insecurity, crime,violence, terrorism, pollution, urban decay, lack of basic hygiene, spread of incurable diseases, ethnic cleansing anddeteriorating education are examples of both objective conditions and subjective perceptions of our society's mostpressing social problems. Of course, our final list of social problems would depend to large extent on where we live and what issues affect our lives most immediately. These problems inhibit the development of society. Moreover, theseproblems are related to each other and it can seem hard to address one without addressing all of them. It would beerroneous to assume that a social problem only affects the people whom it directly touches, but this is not the case. Easyspread of disease for instance may tamper with the society at large. The spread of AIDs for instance has createdmore social problems because it is costly, it is a danger to all members of society, and it leaves many children withoutparents. HIV/AIDs is not a single problem but a complex cause of numerous ones. Similarly, unemployment in Nigeriadoesn't just affect those unemployed but affects the whole economy. But for the purpose of this course, some social problems affecting Nigeria would be addressed for better understanding of how the problems emanate and distort the Nigeria society.

Learning Outcomes for Unit 3

When you have studied this study unit, you should be able to:

3.1 Identify social problems affecting your area.

3.2 Describe how one social problem could lead to another social problem

3.3 Explain how social problem creates social disorganization and chaos in the society

3.4 Suggest possible solutions to any social problem that crop up in the society.

3.1 Poverty:

Poverty is the deprivation from the basic necessities of life and it is the condition of having insufficient resources, lacking vital resources or income. In its most extreme form, poverty is a lack of basic human needs. Poverty is often qualified as:

a) Relative poverty
b) Absolute poverty.

3.1.1 Relative Poverty:

By relative poverty,it means lacking in those in those things which most people in a society would regard as the minimum requirements for a normal life. As a society prospers, the yard stick for relative poverty changes. Relative poverty does not only measure inequality but also define a point below people cannot minimally function as that society would expect. For example, people need clothes to stay warm but they also need clothes for sufficient smartness and suitability to be able to work in a formal organization and retain their job. This illustration means clothes are needed for human normal life but the out-fit look is not an important requirement for normal life.

3.1.2 Absolute Poverty:

By absolute poverty, it means lacking the truly basic necessities for subsistence: food, water, clothing, shelter, nutrition, clean water and health services. Absolute poverty is in its most extreme form. This is the type of poverty that could lead to social problem if not well handled. Absolute poverty can cause terrible suffering and death and prevent people from realizing many of their desires. It is a condition where many people in developing (Africa, Latin American, Asia etc.) countries find themselves. Developing countries could be said have the world's poorest people who struggle for daily food, shelter and other necessities. These people often suffer from severe malnutrition, epidemic disease outbreaks, famine and war while the poor in the developed countries suffer from poor nutrition, mental illness, drug dependence, crime and high rates of disease. According to international organizations, absolute poverty is defined as having household income of less than US$1 per day. In Nigeria for instance, over 61% live below $1 per day while about 90% live below $2 per day. Poverty has been a concern in societies since before the beginning of recorded history.

3.1.3 Effects of Poverty:

Poverty has wide-ranging and often devastating effects.Many of its effects such as poor nutrition and physical health problems result directly from having too little income or too few resources. As a result of poor nutrition and health problems, infant mortality rates among the poor are higher than average, and life expectancies are lower than average. Other effects range from infectious diseases, mental illness, drug abuse/dependence, prostitution to antisocial behaviors. An instance can be seen in Booysen and Summerton (2002) who observed in South Africa that poverty had increase the vulnerability of women to HIV infection because a large number of them go into prostitution and get involved in unsafe and unprotected sex practices which was a result of lack of proper knowledge and education, access to means of protection, and inability to negotiate the use of condom because of the financial power of their sexual partners. Some effects of poverty are not easily understood. An example is relating poverty to crime. If poverty is said to be the major cause of crime, does that mean everybody that are poor are criminals? That is why one needs to be careful when linking crime and poverty. In most times, the primary effects of poverty lead to so many other problems. For instance, extreme hunger and unemployment could all lead to depression which may eventually lead to criminal behavior. People who grow up in poverty do experience lifelong problems because of it. They are at a disadvantage in things such as access to sound education, physical and mental development. Studies have shown that people who grow up in persistently poor households experience more difficulties throughout their lives than those raised in households that are about poverty level. They do not do well in school, have more difficulties in their marriage and more frequently end up in single parenting. All these are factors that easily pose threat to any society that do not give necessary attention to the large population in poverty.

3.1.4 Poverty in developing countries:

The governments of most developing countries provide limited assistance to prevent and alleviate the effects of poverty. Most have minimal social security programmes which provide benefit during periods of unemployment, illness, disability, retirement and families of deceased workers. But unfortunately, these programmes are mostly targeted at providing support for only people who are employed full-time which is a very small percentage of the population in most developing countries. It is with the support of other various organizations that supportsare given

to the large population who are unemployed and in poverty and also lead the campaign on antipoverty programmes. These organizations include international government organizations such as the Unite Nations (UN), World Health Organization (WHO), aid agencies run by developed countries, non-governmental organizations, private and government owned development banks such as Nigerian Agricultural, Commerce and Rural Development Bank (NACRDB), the Bank of Industry (BOI) and many others which provides funding to small scale business to lift people up from poverty level. However, poverty in Nigeria has been one of the major problems that reveal certain causes as responsible for national crises. These causes are as follows:

1. Lack of education
2. Corruption of political and economy managers of the country
3. Lack of national planning
4. Mismanagement of resources
5. Lack of financially viable skills
6. Over population
7. High standard of living
8. Lack of individual responsibility and a mindset that promotes welfare dependency etc.

3.1.5 Suggested solutions to poverty in Nigeria:

1. Effective individual and national planning
2. Proper management of state resources
3. Leadership commitment to citizens' welfare
4. Provision of sound education facilities
5. Acquisition of financially viable skills.

3.2 Prostitution

Prostitution is the act of engaging in sexual intercourse/practices in exchange for financial gain or other material gain. Persons prostitute themselves when they grant sexual favors to others in exchange for money, gifts, or other payment and in so doing use their bodies as commodities. In legal terms, the word prostitute refers only to those who engage overtly in such sexual-economic transactions, usually for a specified sum of money. Prostitutes maybe of either sex, but

throughout history the majority have been women, reflecting both the traditional socioeconomic dependency of women and the tendency to exploit female sexuality. Prostitution has often been characterized as the world's oldest profession, the concept of woman as property, which prevailed in most cultures until the end of the 19th century, meant that the profits of the profession most often accrued to the men who controlled it. Men have traditionally been characterized as procurers and customers, but they are increasingly being identified as prostitutes.

Prostitution in various forms has existed from earliest times. It is dependent on economic, social and sexual values of a society. In some societies prostitution was believed to ensure the preservation of the family. Women have usually entered prostitution through coercion and economic stress. While in most societies, prostitutes have had a low social status and a restricted future, that even if they get rich from the profession they are still not regarded and referred to as "urban poor" because their sexual service was disapproved and considered degrading.

Prostitution had seriously pose threat to most societies especially in the developing countries which have created so many kinds of social problems. Prostitution has promoted immorality to a level that is becoming unbearable for most societies to cope with. It further leads to other social problems such as child out of wedlock, child neglect, child abuse, single parenting, and high spread rate of infectious and contagious diseases such as staphylococcus, HIV, gonorrhea etc.

3.2.1 Causes of prostitution in Nigeria:
1. Lack of proper socialization from birth
2. Child trafficking/neglect/abuse
3. Poverty
4. High rate unemployment
5. Social stigmatization/social outcasts
6. War and extreme conditions such as famine, drought, disasters etc.
7. Greediness and selfishness etc.

3.2.2 Suggested solutions for prostitution in Nigeria

1. Proper socialization/education
2. Teaching of various economically viable skills
3. Creation of employment and provision of women development programmes
4. Legal prohibition of offenders, sponsors and pimps/customers of prostitutions

3.3. Terrorism

Terrorism is the systematic use of terror, especially as a means of coercion. In the international community, however, terrorism has no universally agreed, legally binding, criminal law definition (Ankus Martyn, 2002). Common definitions of terrorism refer only to those violent acts which are intended to create fear (terror), are perpetrated for a religious, political or, ideological goal; and deliberately target or disregard the safety of non-combatants (civilians). That is, it is a deliberate creation and exploitation of fear for bringing about political, social and religious change. Some definitions now include acts of unlawful violence and war. The use of similar tactics by criminal organizations for protection rackets or to enforce a code of silence is usually not labelled terrorism though these same actions may later be labelled terrorism when done by a politically motivated group. Terrorism involves acts such as kidnapping, bombing, assassination, arson and plane hijacking.

The definition of terrorism has proved controversial. Various legal systems and government agencies use different definitions of terrorism in their national legislation. Moreover, the international community has been slow to formulate a universally agreed, legally binding definition of this crime that end up creating several social problems such as homelessness, famine, refugee, people's dislocation etc. These difficulties arise from the fact that the term "terrorism" is politically and emotionally charged (Hoffman, 1988). During the 1970s and 1980s, the United Nations attempts to define the term foundered mainly due to differences of opinion between various members about the use of violence in the context of conflicts over national liberation and self-determination" (Angus, 2002).

Nonetheless, the international community has adopted a series of sectoral conventions that define and criminalize various types of terrorist activities. Moreover, since 1994, the United Nations General Assembly has repeatedly condemned terrorist acts using the following political

description of terrorism: "Criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes are in any circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them.

Hoffman (2006) believes it is possible to identify some key characteristics of terrorism. He proposes that by distinguishing terrorists from other types of criminals and terrorism from other forms of crime, we come to appreciate that terrorism is:

- Ineluctably political in aims and motives
- Violent or equally important, threatens violence
- Designed to have far-reaching psychological repercussions beyond the immediate victim or target
- Conducted by an organization with an identifiable chain of command or conspiratorial cell structure
- Perpetrated by a sub-national or non-state entity

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), terrorism is the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives. Terrorism is not only to sow panic but also to undermine confidence in the government and political leadership of the targeted country. It is therefore, designed to have psychological effects that reach far beyond its impact on the immediate victims or object of an attack.

Terrorists foster an environment of fear and intimidation that they can manipulate. As a result, terrorism's success is measured by its ability to attract attention to the terrorists and their cause and by the psychological impact it exerts over a nation and its citizenry. Examples of terrorist groups are:
a. Jama'atuAhlis Sunna Lidda'awatiwal-Jihad (which was dubbed to be Boko Haram by the residents of the north-eastern of Maiduguri where the group had its headquarter),
b. The AlQaeda group
c. The ETA group in Spain (Euskadi Ta Astakasuna)

d. Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)

e. Communist Party of India, Philippines and Turkey

f. Irish People's Liberation Organization and many more.

3.3.1 Types of Terrorism

In early 1975, the Law Enforcement Assistant Administration in the United States formed the National Advisory Committee on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals. One of the five volumes that the committee wrote was entitled *Disorders and Terrorism*, produced by the Task Force on Disorders and Terrorism under the direction of H.H.A. Cooper, Director of the Task Force staff. The Task Force classified terrorism into six categories.

1. Civil order
2. Political terrorism
3. Non-political terrorism
4. Quasi-terrorism
5. Official or state terrorism
6. Limited terrorism

3.3.2 Causes of terrorism in Nigeria:

1. Selfish political interests
2. Religious and political fundamentalism
3. Criminally-minded individuals coming together to form a group
4. Injustice and social inequality
5. Marginalization, political and economic exclusion in the country
6. Porous border and weak security measures

3.3.3 Suggested solutions for terrorism in Nigeria:

1. Effective border patrol and security
2. Political inclusion of every quarter
3. Responsible country leadership
4. Welfare of citizens
5. Equilibrium in the share/distribution of national allocation and resources

3.4 HIV/AIDS (Human Immunodeficiency and Virus-Acquired Immune Deficiency)

HIV is a virus disabling immune system which causes or leads to AIDS. It is genetically programmed to hijack the reproductive machinery of a human cell, and then trick it into producing as many copies of the virus as it can before the cell dies. HIV is also an infectious agent and disease that leaves a person vulnerable to life-threatening infections. Two types of HIV virus had been identified by scientist. These are:

1. HIV-1 which is the primary cause of AIDS worldwide
2. HIV-2 which is the type that is mostly found only in West African primate sooty mangabey (an old world monkey).

3.4.1 AIDS in Nigeria

In the past decade, great strides have been made in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of HIV/AIDS. The HIV and AIDS pandemic had claimed 20million lives globally over twenty years (Asquo, 2007). Asuquo goes further to state that an estimated 28million people are living with HIV and AIDS; 25million of these people are in Sub-Saharan Africa, of whom 57% are women (UNIADS and WHO, 2001).

Nigeria faces the formidable task of tackling this widespread epidemic which has already claimed so many lives and a large number of the population living with it. The HIV epidemic in Nigeria is complex and varies widely by region. In some states, the epidemic is more concentrated and driven by high-risk behaviors, while other states have more generalized epidemics that are sustained primarily by multiple sexual partnerships in the general population. Youth and young adults in Nigeria are particularly vulnerable to HIV, with young women at higher risk than young men. There are many risk factors that contribute to the spread of HIV, including prostitution, high-risk practices among itinerant workers, high prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (STI), clandestine high-risk heterosexual and homosexual practices, international trafficking of women, and irregular blood screening.

In the year 2001, Nigeria had a HIV prevalence rate of 4.4 percent and this made the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria flagged off a National treatment programme for People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs) in Nigeria with a target of providing antiretroviral

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drugs for 10,000 adults and 5000 children annually. Treatment centres were established in 25 health care facilities across the country (Umeh and Ejike, 2004) while additional 11 tertiary health institutions were further created and designated to treatment of Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT). Several years later, much successful result is yet to be achieved. As of 2012 in Nigeria, the HIV prevalence rate among adults ages 15-49 was still at 3.1 percent,making Nigeria having the second-largest number of people living with HIV (CIA World Factbook, 2012).

Nigeria is emerging from a period of military rule that accounted for almost 28 of the 47 years since independence in 1960. Consequently, the policy environment is not fully democratized. Civil society was weak during the military era, and its role in advocacy and lobbying remains weak. The size of the population and the nation pose logistical and political challenges particularly due to the political determination of the Nigerian Government to achieve health care equity across geopolitical zones. The necessity to coordinate programs simultaneously at the federal, state and local levels introduces complexity into planning. The large private sector is largely unregulated and, more importantly, has no formal connection to the public health system where most HIV interventions are delivered. Training and human resource development is severely limited in all sectors and will hamper program implementation at all levels. Care and support is limited because existing staff are overstretched and most have insufficient training in key technical areas to provide complete HIV services. All these put together posed threats to the Nigerian society which eventually crop up social problems.

3.4.2 How HIV causes infections:

HIV transmission occurs when a person is exposed to body fluids infected with the virus, such as blood, vaginal secretions and breast milk. The primary modes of HIV transmission are:

1. Sexual relations with an infected person
2. Sharing hypodermic needles or accidental pricking by a needle contaminated with infected blood
3. Transfer from an infected mother to her baby during pregnancy, child birth, or through breast feeding.

3.4.3 Causes of HIV/AIDS:

1. Indiscriminate and unprotected sex with a victim
2. Use of infected needles, pins, razors or other sharp objects
3. Contact with infected blood products
4. Transfusion of infected blood

3.4.4 Suggested solutions:

1. Proper health education
2. Sexual abstinence/proper prevention before sex (use of condom)
3. Sexual faithfulness to partner
4. Sterilization of every sharp objects used in health centres and in other places if there is need for them to be reused.
5. Proper screening of blood and blood products before administered.

3.4.5   Unemployment

Unemployment is the state of joblessness. That is, it is the condition of having no job. It is a condition of enforced idleness of wage earners who are able and willing to work but cannot find job. In societies in which most people can only earn a living by working for others, being unable to find a job is a serious problem.

Unemployment has been a global issue as developed, developing, undeveloped and underdeveloped nations of the world are experiencing it. It has posed a serious threat to the order of many societies if not all in the globe. As evidence that even developed nations of the world are "combating" with unemployment, in December 2013, an estimate of 6.7 per cent Americans were unemployed.In Federal Republic of Nigeria, the country has large number of her population badly treated by unemployment. The quest for good leadership in solving unemployment in the country has made almost all that are affected by the menace show their reactions in one way or the other. The most pitiable of it is that most youths of the country are crying day and night because of the high rate of unemployment in the country.

In 2012, International Labor Organization, an organization that takes statistics of both the employed and unemployed in the world, stated that about 6% of the world population is unemployed and that the most unemployed are the youths. According to the same organization, about 73.4 million youths were unemployed in 2013. A news publication company, Vanguard (online news), reported on May 19, 2014, that estimated of 60 million Nigerians are unemployed. World Bank Data in 2010 put poverty level among Nigerian citizens as 46% of the nation's population, and this can be caused by unemployment in the country. Nigeria is estimated to have population of over 184 million in the current review of the world population review (World Population Review, July, 5, 2015).

3.5.1 Causes of unemployment in Nigeria:
1. Corruption government officials and top individuals in the Nigerian society
2. Mismanagement of public resources by political leaders and economic managers of the state
3. Lack of sufficient industrialization
4. Poor/epileptic power supply
5. Lack of entrepreneurship education and teaching of financially viable skills
6. Unconducive environment and lack of policies that can support development of micro and small scale businesses
7. Lack of accessible and cheap financing measures for aspiring and existing entrepreneurs
8. Poor economy
9. Over population
10. Lack of good orientation programmes

3.5.2 Suggested solutions to unemployment in Nigeria:
1. Formulation of policies that will encouragement agricultural programmes by the government
2. Formulation of policies that will give room to the support of small and medium scale enterprises
3. Youth empowerment on creativity and self-discovery
4. Retiring the old who are kind of redundant in organizations

5. Proper management of state resources

6. Provision of favourable environment for growth of industrialization

7. Encouraging family planning to reduce over population

8. Economic growth and development

9. Development of infrastructures such as good roads, adequate power supply and education facilities in school at every level

10. Creation of easy access for small scale entrepreneurs to get loan for funding of their businesses

11. Encouragement of skill acquisition. This could be before tertiary institution, during or after.

12. Organising several seminars both by governments, private organizations and non-governmental organizations to orientate and change mind set of the people of Nigeria.

3.6 Corruption

Corruption is dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power typically involving bribery. Corruption is illegitimate use of power to benefit a private interest (Morris 1991). Corruption is the giving of bribe by a person to an official so that the truth will not be told. It involves the embezzlement of public fund for personal use. Corruption is involving in any act which is considered to be criminal act according to the Law of the particular society.

Corruptions have been and continue to be the biggest among the challenges and one of the major social problems in Nigeria. It is clear to every citizen of Nigeria that the level of corruption in the country is very high. Corruption in the country is found in all the entire sectors of the country and had eaten deep into the sectors. Be it a small or big sector, there is every possibility of observing corrupt practices when critically examined. In the 2014 result on corruption ranking, Nigeria ranked 136 out 174 surveyed countries (Transparency International, 2014). The result shows that there is improvement in the corrupt state of the country compared to previous years' ranking though still high. Mathematically, it shows that Nigeria is the 38th most corrupt country in the world in 2014.

What it implies is that Nigeria had failed when it comes to transparency in the country. The country is not clean at all from the judgement. In 2013, Denmark and New Zealand scored highest scores of 91% each meaning the countries are clean and has high Confidence Interval than that of Nigeria and other countries with low CI. When any object is said to be transparent, what it means is that the object allows light to pass through them. In the other words, Nigeria is highly corrupt. The opposite of transparent is opaque. Instead of the country to be transparent, it is considered as an opaque country that does not allow light to pass through it.

3.6.1 Faces of Corruption in Nigeria:

Corruption in Nigeria takes many forms. Corruption can be interpreted by many people in many ways. It is hard to enter any sector in Nigeria without observing one corrupt practice or the other. The faces or areas where corruption is observed in the country are not only in the public sector or in politics. The following are forms of corruption in Nigeria:

1. Political corruption (federal and state executive councils, national and state assemblies, political parties etc.)
2. Corruption in Nigerian universities and colleges
3. Corruption in the military, para-military and security forces in Nigeria (such as Nigerian Army, Navy, Police force, Custom services, Immigration service, Federal Road Safety Corps, NDLEA etc.)
4. Corruption in public and private organizations (e.g NNPC, Aviation sector (FAAN), PHCN, Federal Island Revenue Service (FIRS), Airtel, Globacom, banking industry, stock exchange market etc)
5. Corruption in the Nigeria Football Federation
6. Corruption in Nigerian churches
7. Internet fraud etc.

3.6.2 Causes of corruption in Nigeria:

There are several factors that cause corruption in Nigeria. But the major factors are as follows:

1. Greediness
2. Perverted social expectations
3. Political patronage and interests

4. Tribalism
5. Poor youth empowerment
6. Poverty
7. Materialistic society
8. Unemployment
9. Lack of public accountability
10. The nation's economic problem i.e break down of the nation's value system
11. Legal apathy, slow and weak legal process to punish offenders
12. Immunity to offenders etc.

3.6.3 Effects or consequences of corruption in Nigeria:
1. Poor investment
2. Rise in poverty
3. Continuous rise in unemployment rate
4. Poor national development
5. National crises

3.6.4 Suggested solutions to corruption in Nigeria:
1. Zero tolerance for corruption in the society
2. Rebuilding of society's value systems and morality
3. Self-satisfaction
4. Institution of strong anti-corruption group and strengthening of the legal mechanisms for punishment of offenders
5. Creation of employment
6. Proper government funding of schools in Nigeria and monitoring of the activities in the schools
7. Promotion of social inequality among the citizens
8. Plugging opportunities that gives room for corruption

3.7 Drug Abuse/Trafficking

Drug abuse has been prevalent in the human society. The use of drug and substance has been attributed to people of all ages, it has been observed to be highest among the adolescents and the youth. The majority of the people are found in the secondary schools and higher institutions. Majority of the people who abuse both drugs and substance are within the ages of 15 years and 64 years.

In defining drug abuse and substance abuse, it is pertinent to define other concepts like "Drug ", and "drug addiction". Drug is any substance which in used for treatment or prevention of diseases in man and animals. Every drug has the ability to alter bodily function either positively or negatively. The functioning of the drug depends on:

1. Body composition
2. Type of drug
3. The quantity of the drug
4. Whether the drug was used alone or with other drugs.

Simply put, all drugs are either curative or poisonous. The functioning depends on the purpose attached to it by the user.

Drug addiction results from the persistent use of a particular drug in such a way that at a point, the body depends upon the drug. Drug addiction can also be called "drug dependence" a person who is dependent upon any drug is called "drug addict". People can depend on any drug. A person may be dependent upon paracetamol, even as it is referred to as everyday drug.

NAFDAC explained drug abuse as excessive and persistent self-administration of a particular drug without the regard for the medically or culturally accepted pattern. In another vein, drug abuse is the non-medical use of drugs that interferes with a healthy and productive life. In simpler explanation, drug abuse is the use of drugs without the doctor's prescription. Drug abuse is only associated with medically defined substances.

In the definition of substance abuse we must understand that every drug is also a substance. This in why substance abuse is considered as the use of any product other than food and water in a manner that it affects the way people feel, think, see, and behave. Examples of the substances

include alcohol, all drugs, Indian hemp or cannabis, coffee, codeine, cocaine, heroin and so many others. All these substances affect physical, mental and emotional functioning due to their chemical content. They enter the body through chewing, inhaling, smoking, drinking, rubbing or even injecting. Alcohol is the most commonly abused substance.

3.7.1 Classifications of Drug and Substance Abuse.

Drug and substance abuse can be classified into six categories. The classes are as follows:

1. Stimulants: These categories of substance directly stimulate the central nervous system. Users experience pleasant effects such as increase in energy. The major source of this stimulation come from caffeine substance like cola, coffee, some drugs and energy drinks.

2. Hallucinogens: These are substances that alter the sensory processing unit of the brain. Thus, they produce distorted perception, feeling of anxiety and euphoria, sadness, and inner joy. They normally come from marijuana, lysergic acid diethylamide (LID), and in some cough syrups that contain codeine.

3. Narcotics: These are substances that reduce pain, induce sleep, and are addictive. These are found in heroin, opium, and higher consumption of codeine.

4. Sedatives: These categories of substance are believed to have the ability to relieve stress and anxiety. Some of them induce sleep, ease tension, cause relaxation, or even help users to forget their problems. They sources from valium, alcohol, chloroform, promethazine and others.

5. Tranquilizers: They produce calmness without bringing drowsiness. They are derived from lithium related drugs and librium related drugs like chlordiazepoxide hydrochloride.

6. Miscellaneous: This is a group of volatile solvents or inhalants that provide euphoria, emotional disinhibition and perpetual distortion of thoughts to the user. Sources include gums, glue, spot removers, tube repairs, perfumes, other sources.

The illegal dealings in any forms of these drugs or substances is referred to as drug trafficking

Despite several national and international efforts aimed at stemming the problems of drug abuse/trafficking, it continues to increase and have assumed epidemic proportions in Nigeria. The most unfortunate victims of these global problems are the children and youths who use and

abuse the drug and who are being used in drug trafficking. This in most cases leads to juvenile and adult crimes, armed robbery, rape, and several other crimes. The problem of drug abuse is so serious now that it has extended beyond the usual characteristic profile of abusers being male, adult and urban based to now include females, youngsters and those who live in the rural areas. The use of drug abuse constitutes major threats to the effective functioning of human societies. Lives are lost daily through addiction and activities of addicts. A significant number of deaths from accidents and violent crimes have been traced to the activities of persons under the influence of drugs.

3.7.2 Causes of Drug/Substance Abuse/Trafficking

Below are list of the conditions that can cause substance abuse. These causes include:

1. Heredity
2. Greed
3. Curiosity or experimental curiosity
4. Peer influence/pressure
5. Negative economic situation like unemployment, bankruptcy etc.
6. Desire to have long lasting energy
7. Timidity
8. Need to feel better
9. Lack of parental control
10. Inability to control withdrawal syndrome
11. Availability of substances
12. Fear

3.7.3 Consequences of Drug/Substance Abuse/Trafficking

Substance and drug abuse is a disease. As a disease, it poses many threats to the normal functioning of human. Below is the list of the consequences of substance abuse.

1. Abuse can induce problem like liver arthrosis, pancreatic and peptic ulcer, tuberculosis, hypertension, and neurological. Disorders.
2. Abuse can induce mental retardation for the baby in the womb, growth deficiency and delayed motor development.

3. It can also induce craniofacial abnormalities, limb abnormalities, and cardiac defects.

4. It can facilitate pathological drunkenness and suicidal behavior.

5. It can create socially broken homes, increased crime rate, sexual offences, industrial lose, money laundering and homicide of any kind.

6. Tobacco causes stimulation of the heart and narrows blood vessels. These produce hypertension, headache, loss of appetite, nausea, and delayed growth of the foetus.

7. It aggravates the occurrence of sinuosity, bronchitis, cancer, stroke and heart attack.

8. Stimulants cause lethargy, irritability, exaggerated self-confidence, damages of nose lining, insomnia, and psychiatric complication.

9. Inhalants cause anemia, kidney damage, and stomach bleeding.

10. Narcotic cause poor perception, constipation cough, suppression, vomiting, drowsiness and sleep, unconsciousness, and at times death.

3.7.4 Suggested solutions to drug abuse/trafficking:

1. Enlightenment on the dangers of drug abuse/trafficking

2. Creation of standard rehabilitation centers

3. Improvement of economic condition of citizens

4. Legal punishment for those involve in the deal of drug abuse/trafficking

5. Motivation of youths in believing in themselves rather than depending on drugs and shunning violence.

3.8 Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a major problem in our world today and it could also be evident in parts of Africa, Nigeria inclusive. It is the sales of human beings both within and across the borders of a particular country and has become an issue of concern in our present day Nigeria. Human trafficking is largely a form of slavery. The international awareness of the crime has over the years increased. Nigeria is a country of origin, transit and destination for human trafficking (Mashil 2005). Internal trafficking of Nigerian women and children are recruited from rural areas (Oyo, Osun, Ogun, Akwa-Ibom, Cross River, Bayelsa, Ebonyi, Imo, Benue, Niger, and Kwara states) to cities such as Lagos, Abeokuta, Ibadan, Kano, Kaduna, Port Harcourt and Calabar. They are trafficked to these regions predominantly for involuntary domestic servitude and forced

commercial sexual exploitation, and boys, for forced labor in street vending, domestic servitude, mining, and begging. International trafficked Nigerians come from all parts of Nigeria but some states tend to provide more trafficked persons than others. These states include Akwa-Ibom, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ebonyi, Kano, Delta, Ogun, Oyo and Lagos.

As can be noted, women are the main victims of this fraudulent act. Women are taken to various places in the world to be used to generate money for the people indulging in such act. This fraudulent act violates the constitution which talks about promoting the rights of individuals in the society rather than restricting their rights by confining them and forcing them to sell their bodies for money. Nigerian women and children are taken from Nigeria to other West and Central African countries, primarily Gabon, Cameroon, Ghana, Chad, Benin, Togo, Niger, Burkina Faso, and the Gambia, for the same purposes. Children from West African states like Benin, Togo, and Ghana where Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) rules allow for easy entry are also forced to work in Nigeria, and some are subjected to hazardous jobs in Nigeria's granite mines. Nigerian women and girls are also taken to Europe, especially to Italy and Russia, and to the Middle East and North Africa, for forced prostitution. Traffickers sometimes move their victims to Europe by caravan, forcing them to cross the desert on foot, and subjecting them to forced prostitution to repay heavy debts for travel expenses.

The Government of Nigeria fully complies with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. It demonstrated sustained progress to combat human trafficking. In 2009, the government convicted 25 trafficking offenders and provided care for 1,109 victims. It also continued to undertake strong efforts to raise awareness of human trafficking. In addition, its National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) ceased the practice of interrogating trafficking suspects at the same Lagos facility housing its shelter for trafficking victims. To better ensure victims' rights are respected, NAPTIP formed a committee in mid-2009 to review victim care policies, aiming to strike a balance between ensuring victims' safety in shelters and promoting their freedom of movement. The Nigerian government in 2009 pledged over $7 million in annual funds for NAPTIP's operation and activities.

Human trafficking is a crime that is against all laws even the sacred laws and to this effect, efforts have been made by bodies at both national and international level to curb this insolent practices. At the international level, there are a number of treaties, laws, protocols and

conventions that Nigeria is signatory to. Prominent among these are the United Nations Convention on the Declaration of Human Rights (1948); the United Nations Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979); the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); the United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, especially on the Sales of a Child, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (2002); and the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (2000). At the national level, the 1999 constitution provides for the respect and dignity of human persons. It provides in section 34(1) that no person shall be subjected to torture, in human or degrading treatment or held in slavery or required to perform compulsory labor. Therefore fighting trafficking in Nigeria is all encompassing because it requires a need for synergy of efforts to create public awareness of the crime, address the poverty situation in the country, create employment for the youths, reinforce relevant national laws, organize counseling, rehabilitation and reintegration program for the victims and allow them access to government subsidized services for HIV/AIDS and other female reproductive health care programs.

3.8.1 Agents of human trafficking:

1. The traffickers
2. The trafficked persons
3. The users of the trafficked person

3.8.2 Means of transportation of human trafficking:

1. Transportation by road
2. Transportation by sea
3. Transportation by air which is the most difficult because of the heightened security controls.

3.8.3 Purpose of human trafficking:

1. For prostitution
2. For domestic help
3. For rituals (blood money)
4. For begging
5. For baby harvesting

3.8.4 Causes of human trafficking in Nigeria:

The supply and demand equation of human trafficking is typically in terms of "push" and "pull" factors.

Factors contributing to supply are:

1. Unequal access to education
2. Lack of legitimate and fulfilling employment opportunities
3. Sex-selective migration policies
4. Less access to information
5. Disruption of support systems
6. Traditional community attitudes

Factors contributing to demand are:

1. Women's perceived suitability
2. Increase demand for foreign workers
3. Growth of the billion-dollar sex and entertainment industry
4. Low risk-high profit nature of trafficking
5. Ease in controlling the women
6. Lack of access to legal redress
7. Devaluation of women and children's human rights

The push factors has to do with the factors that make people want to move out of where they are by every means open to them. It is because of this that many of those that are trafficked were easily deceived for greener pasture which they eventually fall victim of on the long run. The push factors are as follows:

1. Poverty
2. Perversion of cultural traditions
3. Manipulation of religious rituals
4. Lack of information
5. Harmful cultural and social realities
6. HIV/AIDS, AIDS Orphans
7. Peer pressure
8. Weak legal framework

9. Restrictive migratory policies

The pull factors are factors responsible for making people go into their place of destination. The pull factors of human trafficking are:

1. Need for low skilled labor
2. High profits
3. Low risk

In summary, the causes of human trafficking can be summarized as follows:

1. Wide spread poverty
2. Desire to migrate to study and work in the urban city and abroad
3. Conflicts in the society
4. Weak legal system
5. Lack of adequate legislation and of political will and commitment to enforce existing legislation or mandates are other factors that facilitate trafficking in persons
6. The practice of entrusting poor children to more affluent friends or relatives may create vulnerability. Some parents sell their children, not just for the money, but also in the hope that their children will escape a situation of chronic poverty and move to a place where they will have a better life and more opportunities.

3.8.5 Suggested solutions to human trafficking:

1. Government should try attempt the problem of poverty
2. Government should create more awareness for people to know several ways traffickers use to deceive them into trafficking
3. Establishment of significant reintegrated programmes for trafficked persons
4. Prominent legal actions should be put in place to deter traffickers
5. Policies should be reviewed to have human face to favor most people at the grass root most especially women and children.

3.9 Child Labor

Child labor is so widespread in Nigeria that it has been accepted by many as part of normal life. But the practice is only an aberration which takes away the innocence of millions of children; it is a threat to the future of the country. Globalization which tends to manifest itself in the proliferation of industries in many less developed countries has been cited as one of the major cause of child labor (Cigno and Guarcello, 2002).

The Nigerian NGO's Report reveals that a staggering 15 million children under the age of 14 are working across Nigeria. Many of these children are exposed to long hours of work in dangerous and unhealthy environments, carrying too much responsibility for their age. Working in these hazardous conditions with little food, small pay, no education and no medical care establishes a cycle of child rights violation. While children have always worked in Nigeria, the figures have significantly increased over the years. The end of the oil boom in the 70s, coupled with mounting poverty, has driven millions of children into labor.

The difficulties faced by the Nigerian child should really be looked into, as they have proven over the years that they are problems which are here to stay. Recent studies and reports, especially from the International Labor Organization (ILO) show that child labor has been made worse in recent times because some of these children have no solid background, no education and no parental care. In the circumstances, they become street hawkers. They work in the streets during the day, and work even at night in some cases. Such lifestyles become very dangerous and nomadic types of life. There is little wonder therefore, that the future of these children is very dark and bleak.

In the past, children worked with their families, learning skills they would need as adults. But today, children are forced to work for their own and their family's survival. The money earned by 'children workers' has become a significant part of the family income. One of the most heartbreaking reminders that we are a poor country is the overwhelming number of children on our streets selling different items to passers-by. From Lagos to Benin, Kano to Enugu, children under the age of eighteen, through circumstances beyond their control, are left to fend for

themselves, and often for their parents as well, through the money they make working on the streets.

There are many children in Nigeria who work under inhumane conditions hidden from public view. The conditions of some of these children are compounded by the fact that they do not receive any kind of formal education. Because of the ramifications and consequences of child labor, it is no wonder that it is actually illegal in Nigeria, although the sheer scale of the activity gives the impression that it is legal.

Many argue that child labor is associated with poverty. And, they believe that until concrete measures are taken to tackle and reduce poverty, child labor will continue to be with us. They say that parents and guardians who push their wards towards paid or unpaid labor do not do so as a matter of preference, most of them usually do so because they have been left with no other choice. Some do so because they are widowed and the means by which they can look after the family is severely limited.

Child Rights activists also submit that lack of access to education is a major reason for the child labor quagmire. In many developing countries, and evidently in Nigeria, quality education is no longer free. The 'free education' available in many local and state governments across the country does not provide the desirable tools for future freedom from ignorance or even preparation for work after education. Statistics shows that these working children lose out on education because they have no time, money or energy to go to school. It also shows that about six million children, comprising of boys and girls, do not attend school at all, while one million children are forced to drop out of school due to poverty or because their parents demand for them to contribute to the family's income. Over eight million children manage to stay in school and work at their spare time to pay school fees. But due to high demand at work, these children normally skip classes. Missing out on education makes it impossible to break the cycle of poverty and exploitation and prevents them from having a better life and a safer future.

Apparently aware of the dangers of child labor, the United Nations General Assembly on November 20, 1989 came out with a convention on the Rights of a Child, which 198

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countries including Nigeria endorsed. Earlier before 1973, the United Nations through its organ, the International Labor Organization in convention C138, had advised State parties to ensure a minimum age of employment, which usually should correspond to the age of leaving primary school. Again in 1999, the International Labor Organization (ILO) adopted a more comprehensive measure by banning the use of children in what it referred to as the "worst forms" of child labor and stipulating penalties for violation (ILO, 1996). This was as a result of high level of child abuse that existed within this period. They lost confidence in most parents and most care givers which led Nandana (1988) to remark, that, when you look into a child's eyes you expect to see hope, trust, and innocence, but these signs of childhood are replaced by betrayal, hunger, fear, and suspicion. That, we need to take a serious stock for ourselves and the society we have created.

Child labor remains a major source of concern in Nigeria, in spite of legislative measures taken by the government at various levels. In 1998, the international labor organization (ILO) estimated that 24.6 percent of children between the ages 10-14 in Nigeria were working (World Development Indicators, 2000). Earlier before that time in 1994, the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) reported that approximately 24 percent (12 million) of all children under the age of 15 worked (UNICEF/FOS, 1995). It is a ridiculous sight in most big cities, as well as rural villages today, to see children of school age, trading food on the streets, herding animals, tanning and drying raw leather products, fetching water for commercial purposes, washing dishes at restaurants, serving as domestic hands, selling wares at kiosks, collecting firewood for business, harvesting crops in family farms or commercial plantations, amongst other activities (Ajah, 1990).

It was revealed in a meeting held in Kaduna recently by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), that three years after the Child Rights Act was introduced and passed by virtually all the 17 southern States here in Nigeria, only three out of the 19 northern states have passed the Child Rights Act. "The law seeks to promote the rights of children to better life and protect them against the vagaries of exploitation, abuse and exploitation". Rabiu Musa, UNICEF

Communications Officer stated. "Kogi, Kwara and Niger states have passed the law, while Sokoto and Katsina are almost sealing it". He said.

He explained that the states were amending the Act to suit their local peculiarities in terms of religion, culture and environment. Musa said about 10 million children were not in school in the country and called on stakeholders to collaborate in reversing the trend as it was becoming a serious social problem. According to him, UNICEF is engaging parents, the three tiers of government and institutions, including NGOs, to address issues of child labor and trafficking.

In order to protect the Nigerian child, the Federal Government has made various efforts to control the child labor process. In August, 2003, the Nigerian Government formally adopted three International LaborOrganisation (ILO) conventions setting a minimum age for the employment of children. In addition, the country signed a memorandum of understanding in cooperation with ILO to launch a country programme under the International Programme for Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC). The government showed further commitment by implementing the West African Cocoa Agriculture Project (WACAP) and by passing the Child Rights Act Section 28 and 29 into Law. The Child Rights Act prohibits exploitative labor and enforces sections 58 to 64 of the Labor Decree of 1974, now Labor Act. All legislations are designed to protect children from exploitative work.

3.9.1 Patterns of child labor in Nigeria by zone

SOUTH WEST	SOUTH EAST	NORTH WEST	NORTH EAST
Street trading	Street trading	Street trading	Street trading
Apprenticeships	Apprenticeships	Herding	Herding
Domestic service	Factory work	Farming	Kiosk operating
Hotel attendance	Vending	Shoe shinning	Shoe shinning
Vending	Car washing	Begging	Begging
Car washing	Hawking	Garage boys	Garage boys
Hawking	Vulcanizers	Hawking	Hawking
Vulcanizers	Bus conducting	Vulcanizers	
Bus conducting	Prostitution	Erating	
Prostitution			

Potage			
Weaving			

Bonnet, 1993

3.9.2 Suggested Solutions to Child Labor

It is however sad to discover that these bad trends still thrive in the country. To solve the problem of child labor, activists suggest that governments must be committed to progress in some crucial areas. These critical areas are poverty reduction and alleviation; provision of easy access to quality education; and availability of social security.

A child right activist, who spoke on condition of anonymity, explained what needs to be done in the critical areas. She said, "To reduce poverty significantly, progress must be made in the areas of economic growth, investment and jobs. Greater access to jobs by parents, especially women will help minimize the incidence of child labor in the country. Progress on education should be on these important aspects.

"Free education should be made available to all children in the country and an enforcement of the universal basic rights to education by all children should be vigorously pursued. Secondly, the government should improve the quality of education to ensure that even children from poor homes have access to quality education. Thirdly, specific interventions in the areas of social security will still be required to minimize child labor."

The bottom-line is that all forms of child labor exposes children to exploitation and abuse. The children are forced to surrender their innocence and, in many cases, their future. It is therefore important to save these children by intensifying efforts to control all forms of child labor in the country. If the youths of a country are truly the future of that country, then Nigeria's future needs a major rescue operation.

3.10   Tribalism:

Tribalism is the loyalty to the customs, beliefs and social organization of a tribe or social group and promoting these over and above those of other groups within the society. In Nigeria,

tribalism has remained an entrenched social problem that has invoked concern within society especially with the intervention of the various levels of government to nip its effect in the bud.

3.10.1 Causes of tribalism in Nigeria:

1. Poor leadership in government that promotes sectionalism and ethnic politics
2. Corruption
3. Subjective criteria, mediocrity, politicking, inequity and unfairness in the process of nation's resource allocation
4. Entrenchment of social practices that promotes nepotism, cronyism and favoritism in the society
5. Disunity in the society
6. Improper existing social and legal framework that can promote meritocracy, quality, intelligence, innovation and so on.

3.10.2 Suggested solutions to tribalism in Nigeria:

1. Good leadership in governance that will promote fairness, equity and excellence
2. Accountable and representative leadership
3. Separating politics from true governance
4. Promotion of unity in the country
5. Discouragement of nepotism and favoritism
6. Strengthen and promote social and legal framework that supports meritocracy and excellence.

Summary of Unit 3

In Unit 3, you have learned that:

1. Different kinds of social problems in Nigeria had been examined as well as their causes and suggested solutions.
2. One particular problem most likely leads to another. Example is poverty leading to prostitution, child labor/trafficking, drug abuse/trafficking and so on, or unemployment leading human trafficking, terrorism, cyber-crime etc.

3. As one social institution is affected, if not quickly and properly addressed leads to the affection of another social institution. An example is when the economy institution is in crises could lead to crises in the family institution too.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Unit 3

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning Outcomes by answering these questions. You can check your answers with the notes on the Self-Assessment Questions at the end of the module.

SAQ 3.1 (tests learning outcome 3.1)

Identify different social problems known to you?

SAQ 3.2 (tests learning outcome 3.2)

How can poverty be correctly defined?

SAQ 3.3 (tests learning outcome 3.3)

What other social problem can the problem of prostitution leads you?

SAQ 3.4 (tests learning outcome 3.4)

What are the push and pull factors that led people into human trafficking?

SAQ 3.5 (tests learning outcome 3.5)

What are the patterns of child labor in the South-Eastern part of Nigeria?

SAQ 3.6 (tests learning outcome 3.6)

What solution can you suggest for the problem of unemployment in Nigeria?

SAQ 3.7 (tests learning outcome 3.7)

Identify different kinds of terrorist groups known to you?

Notes on the Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Unit 3

SAQ 3.1: Types of social problem includes- poverty, child abuse/labor/trafficking, cyber-crime, examination malpractices, human trafficking, terrorism, prostitution, transactional sex, kidnapping, corruption, unemployment etc.

SAQ 3.2: Poverty is the deprivation from the basic necessities of life and it is the condition of having insufficient resources, lacking vital resources or income. In its most extreme form,

poverty is a lack of basic human needs. What is to be noted in this definition is that poverty does not only mean lack of income as many people thought, but also includes lack in access to social services.

SAQ 3.3: Since prostitution is the act of engaging in sexual intercourse/practices with multiple partners in exchange for financial gain or other material gain, it could lead to other social problems such as HIV/AIDS, human trafficking, child neglect etc.

SAQ 3.4: The push factors are as follows: Poverty, Perversion of cultural traditions, Manipulation of religious rituals, Lack of information, Harmful cultural and social realities, HIV/AIDS, Peer pressure, Weak legal framework, Restrictive migratory policies etc.
While the pull factors are: Need for low skilled labor, High profits, Low risk etc.

SAQ 3.5: The patterns of child labor in the South-Eastern Nigeria are: Street trading, Apprenticeships, Factory work, Vending, Car washing, Hawking, Vulcanizers, Bus conducting and Prostitution

SAQ 3.6: Suggested solutions for unemployment in Nigeria are: Formulation of policies that will encouragement agricultural programmes by the government, Formulation of policies that will give room to the support of small and medium scale enterprises, Youth empowerment on creativity and self-discovery, Proper management of state resources, Provision of favorable environment for growth of industrialization, Encouraging family planning to reduce over population, Economic growth and development, Development of infrastructures such as good roads, adequate power supply and education facilities in school at every level, Encouragement of skill acquisition.

SAQ 3.7: The different types of terrorist groups are: Jama'atuAhlis Sunna Lidda'awatiwal-Jihad popularly known as Boko Haram, The AlQaeda group, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Communist Party of India, Philippines and Turkey.

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Overview of the Course:

As it has being discussed above, a social problem convulses the entire fabric of the society. It is a problem that is phenomenally intolerable to the whole social structure of every society. All the normal course of events, patterns of relationship, the goals and values of the society are threatened; the dimension of structural dislocation may vary but the commonality of all social problems is that is an abnormal growth which inevitably creates pressure on the members of the society. Also, social problem are antithetical to social health of the members of the society been affected.

No society in the world is devoid of social problem, although, there nature and character varies. This is because human beings are different from each other and conditions also differ within societies. Sociologists have observed that human beings are entirely selfish and greedy i.e. concerned mainly with the satisfaction of their own desire. The implication of this is that human relation must be intensively competitive from which it is realized that force and fraud are the most effective means of dealing with his fellows. Furthermore, social problems have long been

inseparable feature of human society and an unavoidable experience of mankind. Social problems are reflection of the levels of development at different points in time and place (Nwabueze, 1997). According to him, at some points in history, common social problems included inter-tribal wars, slave raids etc. while at another point, issues such as decolonization, drug abuse, AIDS constitute serious social concern. The nature and character of social problems in Nigeria reflect a dynamic posture depicting the transition from underdevelopment to socio-economic advancement. The social problems in the past years have ceased to exist and new ones have emerged while those that still exist had taken another new dimension.

Conclusively, Nigeria is currently on a hot seat now undergoing all kinds of social problems-high rate of unemployed graduates and poverty, porous education system, terrorism, corruption, bad economy, and weakening of the family institution which is the basic unit of every society. It is therefore pertinent to mention that most of the current social problems if not all are likely to continue for several forthcoming years. This is because the conditions that gave birth to most of these social problems are yet to be tackled and addressed. Until when the conditions that gave birth to the problems are addressed appropriately, the social problems will not cease to exist. For instance, more jobs could be created to reduce the high rate of unemployment and poverty if corruption is reduced to the least minimum if not totally eliminated.