Issues in Social Work Methods and Contemporary Project in Africa

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Abstract
The study assessed various methods with which social work practice namely: Social Case Work, Social Group Work, Community Organization, Social Action, Social Welfare Research, Social Welfare Administrator were carried out. The work highlighted the available indigenous practice in Africa and evaluated extent to which this practice has impacted the beneficiaries so far. The researcher identified the workforce in social work out fit and her agencies who were deemed to be professionals. Evidence based practice has developed as an innovation by the workforce and its effects examined as applicable in Nigeria. The need for evidence-based practice which had been in the global domain was also illustrated and recommended for continental application if social work practice is to attract administration and proper status and expected recognition.

Introduction
Social work is regarded as a profession and has developed certain methods and techniques which have been tested over-time. These methods and activities have also become pillars in social work practice in issues of social work project, their nomenclature stood out to describe it as "social work methods" "social work activities" and "social work processes" and they are used interchangeably (Rao, et al, 2012). Methods of social work can be explained in six dimensions, according to Rao, the first three are direct helping methods while the remaining last three are sometimes called secondary ones. They are arranged in this order; social case work, social group work, community organization, social action, social welfare research and social welfare administration. These are social work methods in the sense they are systematic and planned modes of helping people in need. Social work practice has undergone and utilized various indigenous practices which had in the past assisted her to effect necessary services till emergent of contemporary method. It is on this platform and its attendant challenges that the scientific methods including (Evidence-based practice) evolved.

Social casework, according to Richmond, (1992:82) pointed out that "it consists of those processes which develop personality through adjustments consciously effected, individual by individual, between men and their social environment. However, Regensburg (1938: 4) stated that social casework is a method of measuring against reality of the client,

"capacity to deal with his problem or pieces of it, while the worker helps him to clarify what the problem is and enable him to think of different ways to solve it".

Again, Hamilton (1951:54) declares that social casework is characterized by the objective to administer practical services and offer counseling in such a way as to arouse and conserve the psychological energies of the client – actively to involve him in the use of the service towards the solution of the dilemma". In addition, Iwarimie-Jaja (1995:2) currently emphasized that social casework encompasses a wide variety of activities, counseling a runaway youth, helping an unemployed person secure training or employment, counseling someone who is suicidal, placing a homeless child to adaptive or foster home, priority protective services to an abusive juvenile (child) finding nursing home for a stroke victim who no longer need confinement in a hospital, counseling a person with drinking problem. Iwarimie-Jaja, further mentioned that the basic aim of social case work is to help client on a one to one basis to meet personal problems and to adjust to his environment. The researcher shares the view of Iwarimie-Jaja and affirmed that social casework is basically one to one interaction between the social worker and his client. Case work enjoys the pre-eminent position because it is the oldest of the social work method and the technique used by the majority of personnel.

Social caseworker involves in the following areas of human endevours: child welfare, the aged, the handicapped health, mental health, youth service, the courts, police services, social services in industry. And every casework model utilizes techniques and theories from psychosocial treatment, functional casework, as problem-solving, crisis oriented short term casework, task-centered casework and behaviour modification (Perlman, 1952).

Group work serves a wide range of people in various agencies, clinical settings and outreach programme. It may be used in helping school children, youthful offender, adolescents, living in single-parent families, the physically and educationally handicapped, the mentally ill, residents of slum hotels and the elderly (Perlman, 1966). Social work with groups is practised in institutions for the elderly and infirm, programs for unmarried mothers, adoption agencies, correctional settings, mental hospitals and day hospitals, halfway houses, substance abuse centers, physical rehabilitation centers, public schools, and family service agencies. Group workers are utilized in street gang work, residential and day camping, and child guidance centers, as well as in more traditional settlement houses and community centers. Group work is often used in combination with casework. Social workers in generalist practice roles must have training in group methods to serve clients adequately in our human service systems.

Perlman's remarkable description of the changes in group work, presented over a decade ago, suggests the strategic role that social workers may play in serving clients in groups.

> [Group work's] domain has widened… to include those agencies and places that are set up to rehabilitate or restore or reform such social functioning as is held to be problematic, impaired, deficient … the actual treatment of the individual group member for his particular problems and the relation of such treatment of personal problems to group membership and process – these are in the center of group work concerns today.

> Since Perlman's analysis of the changes, much has happened in social group work. Group workers have broadened their mission and stressed a "problem" orientation. Group work has been legitimized through research, conceptualization, and model building. Increasing knowledge from group dynamics, psychology, psychiatry, and other behavioural

sciences has provided additional insights for social workers. Many of the conceptual frameworks that are helpful to the application of casework also inform and extend that competence of the group worker.

Social work with groups is intended to facilitate favourable changes in clients' communications skills, self-awareness, reality assessment, and acquisition of constructive societal values to aid in actualizing chosen life goals. For persons living in institutions, groups are a vehicle for fostering responsibility for group life, accenting cooperative and mutual relationships, arousing the need for creative problem-solving and moving toward cohesion and a sense of community. Members of groups have the opportunity to exercise social responsibility through mutually agreed upon activities that serve both the individual members and the greater community. Group work is an instrument to facilitate self-governance leading to greater autonomy, dignity, and respect for democratic ideals.

At first thought, groups should be used because there often is not enough time to work with a number of people individually, but this advantage may be an illusion. The arrangements necessary for forming and maintaining a group and the individual conferences that may be required, may mean that groups save little time. Use of groups is clearly economical when several people have the need for information. Group meetings of prospective adoptive parents are often scheduled to provide information about the agency and give people a chance to ask questions. The pooled questions often give the participants a better understanding of the agency than if each couple were interviewed separately. Groups are also appropriate when common problems must be solved. Adolescent groups often focus on how to study effectively, dress and use makeup, make friends, or prepare for a specific profession or vocation. People who are already interdependent, as in a dormitory, a group home, or a nursing home, may constitute natural groups. Rule-making and other policy decisions are relevant concerns. From such practical issues, the members of the group can often develop the trust to consider behaviour problems and other personal issues.

Groups are useful to share a wide range of experiences from which participants can profit. That other group members have other similar professional social worker as a leader, the experiences of peers are often more effective influences than the experiences of the leader. A final obvious value of groups is that they encourage free interchange. The individual group members develop relationships that stimulate discussion. Group sessions may be especially useful for people who have never talked about their problems and are reluctant to do so. They are often encouraged to talk by the model of open expression by others. Group pressures are effective agents for change. A person may independently try to change his or her speech habits, but if the group is agreed that change is necessary, it is often more likely to happened. In groups concerned with the treatment of personal problems, the leader must be sensitive to those issues that are appropriate for the entire group to discuss and those that should be reserved for individual sessions. Self-disclosure demands a high degree of trust of other group members.

Social work practice with groups is founded on the premise that people are enriched by interpersonal experiences structured around collectively defined goals, satisfying peer relationships, and shared decision-making pertaining to the content of the group's life. The leader helps individual members to use the group's discussion and activities to negotiate and then to fulfill behavioural and developmental contracts. Continuance and security in group life may further benefit members as expressed and unexpressed needs, problems, and life

tasks emerge through the group's process to become the focus of the peer system. The group worker's role is to assist the group to value its sense of collective purpose as well as to continually reexamine what it may do to modify its goals to meet new and emerging needs arising out of the members' dynamic interactions. The group worker assists the group to achieve socially desirable but highly individualistic growth. Understanding of group processes, awareness of members strengths and limitations, and skills in group facilitation enable the leader to guide the group toward healthier interpersonal relationships and group cohesion.

The social worker serving friendship clubs in a community center, or treatment groups in a mental health center, encourages constructive participation to aid members in achieving an optimum level of functioning. To the limit of their capacity, members are encouraged to plan program activities that will enable them to acquire social, creative and practical skills useful in situations outside the group. Along with discussion, the group may employ sports and games, arts and crafts, dramatics, singing, camping and trips and parties to aid member-to-member interaction and strengthen group identification. The wide range of group work services may be viewed as a hierarchy based upon increasingly difficult goals and the need for increasingly skilled leaders. Groups may be led by nonprofessionals who volunteer to serve as program aides or, at the other end of the spectrum, by highly trained group psychotherapists who have had extensive supervised training and experience in a clinical agency. Groups may use the group for different purposes than those that the leader considers dominant for instance, recreation, education, self-help and therapeutic groups.

Community social work has developed out of a legacy of American protest. Organizers are catalysts for social change. They attempt to equip people who are "have-nots" with the skills to bring themselves a better life. The objective differs from casework or group work in that it concerns community change rather than individual or group change. The focus is on structural social change – changes in conditions for large groups of people. The objectives of community organization practice in social work generally include the coordination of existing services, action to expand and modify services, and the creation and organization of new services. The development of new services in response to citizen demand has led to major growth of community work.

A community social worker may help a group to specify the nature of the problem; formulate effective, realizable goals; chart logical steps and program strategies to develop new models of service delivery; identify financial resources; and mount direct action campaigns to secure the service. Community organizers become involved in many social issues, including education, housing, health, leisure-time services, alienation of youth, economic and social control, labour relations, minority-group employment, and child care.

Social issue develop from citizen interest and concern about the imbalance between the needs of people and provisions to meet social ills. Often communications media define and clarify these issues. From issues, citizens who become caught in the necessity or even the morality of the cause development programs for action. From issues, slogans often develop to promote a familiarity with the problem and its solutions. From issues, social agencies are created and financed after political sanctions defined their social value.

The community social worker will use several models of operation. The model to be applied depends on the job to be accomplished. Four major roles can be differentiated; because a given situation may involve several roles, the distinctions are not always clear. The rules of community social work can be summarized as follows: the enabler, advocate, broker,

educator and counselor. In community social work practice, community organization is often distinguished from community planning. Others prefer to divide community organization into processes of directed social change, management of social conflict, and planning. Rothman considers "locality development, social planning, and social action."

Two examples illustrate the extremes and suggest the differences in the needed knowledge: A local health and welfare council plans for the distribution of funds to various member agencies within a community's voluntary network of services. In the course of activities a community social worker recommends additional services based on a survey of assessed need. Other recommendations may include agency mergers, improving accountability systems, interagency coordination and grant applications. Employment opportunities are available on the basis of skill, experience, and educational achievement. While not increasing as rapidly as they were during the later 1960s, jobs are available for practitioners.

The concept of the community outreach worker was broadened during the last decade. Paraprofessional staff with little formal training are employed in their own neighborhoods as advocates, organizers, and referral agents. They may be attached to a neighbourhoood health center and organize a block health-education group or carry on a local campaign to urge residents to seek treatment for a particular contagious disease. Programs organized by ACTION, the federal volunteer agency, such as University Year in Action, Volunteers in Service to America, and the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, employ staff for direct programming among low-income people. State agencies dealing with drug abuse, health child welfare, and mental health also employ some paraprofessional staff to do community social work in the category of "community outreach" person, "neighbourhood worker", or "area liaison" representative. New Careers programs sponsored by Department of Labour developed training and placement programs for paraprofessional in the field of community social work.

Social action has now been considered as a separate technique of social work. It aims at desirable social action and social progress. It is a method that demonstrates the profession of commitment to environmental changes. It makes social worker to take defends on controversial issues.

According to Witmer H.C. "The term social actions refers to organized and legally permitted activities designed to mobilize public opinion. Legislation and public administration in favour of objectives behind to be socially desirable". Witmer also points out that many groups other than those composed of social workers engages in social action such as political parties, labour unions and the like may have this as one of their main objectives. Social action can be understood as a mass approach in a most peaceful manner used for changing or modifying existing social and economic institutions which do not function properly and which has made social work ineffective. Social action may be described as a group of host effort to solve mass problem or to further socially desirable objectives by attempting to influence or change basic social and economic conditions or practices.

Social welfare administration refers to "the process of organizing and directing a social agency. The administration aspects of social work include the organization and management of social agencies public and private. This virtually includes every activity in a social agency that is necessary to the giving of service to the clients and communities. In

short, social welfare administration is a process of organization and direction of a social institution. For social welfare administration to become successful, must set up some realistic and attainable objectives before the agency. These objective are to be shared by the agency personnel. In order to achieve these goal plans formulated, programmes developed and resources mobilized. Proper organization and co-ordinates different activities of the agency are equally important. The aim of social welfare is to attain a good life.

Social work research is the systematic critical investigation of questions in the social welfare field with the purpose of yielding answers to problems of social work, and of extending and generalizing social work knowledge and concepts. It is one of the important tools in our attempt to assess social problem of the community, the type of people affected by the problem and the methods used in trying to solve the problems. Evidence-based practice before this time social worker were reluctant to use researcher-based knowledge in past because it was not widely available and social workers had difficulty understanding how research applied to practice (Krysik and Jerry, 2010). According to Krysik and Jerry, another reason for this reluctance is that teaching students how to use research findings or even how to conduct research was not part of the broad culture of social work education. This eventually made many social workers not actually interested in this innovation. Infant this is the newest and most promising developments in social work practices, called evidence-based practice/EBP).

Evidence-based practices are interventions that appear to be recalled to preferred client outcomes based on scientific evidence. For instance, scientific studies have shown behavioural and cognitive behavioural treatments to be effective in treating anxiety disorder (Derubeis & Crits-Christopher, 1998). Increasingly, funding decisions are being tied to the use of EBPs and treatment outcomes. In contemporary social practice, EBP, is much more than a set of interventions whose effectiveness has been documented by scientific evidence. By adopting EBPs as a guiding pedagogical principles school of social work are attempted to produce professionals who are lifelong learners, who draw on practice-related research findings, and who involve clients as informed participants in intervention decision (Gibibs & Gambrill, 2002). Apart from its solution-solving relevance, EBP, involves 'teaching student the value and skills they need to identify, critically appraise, and apply practice-relevant scientific evidence over the course of their professional carrier' (Howard, McMillen, & Pollio, 2003).Although, as at now, social workers rely primarily on the advice of their colleagues and supervisor, personal experiences, relevant theories and authoritative texts for practice direction (Ezeh, 2012). It is in view of this that this paper examined various methods of dispensing social work practice and suggested a global based practice known as EBPs in order to embrace the international best practice.

Interest Rate
Table 1: Identifying interest in various social work activities
Step 1: Check which of the following indicates your interest in a variety of social work activities and rate them.

	Highly interest	Some what interest	Uncertain	Somewhat disinterested	No interest	Total %
1. Social casework	18	4	-	4	-	26
2. Group work	9	7	-	-	-	16
3. Community Organization	8	5	-	-	-	13
4. Social action	5	3	-	2	3	13
5. Social work research	6	4	1	0	-	11
6. Social welfare Administration	6	4	2	2	1	15
7. EBP	5	1	1	1	1	9
	57	26	3	9	5	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2017.

From the table above, social casework obtained the highest patronized score which was followed by group work. Others that shared similar acceptance were community organization social work and social welfare administration got 12% while social work research had 11%. Evidence-based practices inherited 9% and the must have accounted for its newness in practice. This field work was carried out in Rivers State of Nigerian, one of the states in Nigeria. Nigeria has 36 states and was subdivided into six regional zones namely. North Central, North East, North West, South East, South West and South-South. The country has 774 local government area.

Again before the advent of the above innovations there had been indigenous practice methods within Africa, particularly in the case of Nigeria. It is traceable to the pre-colonial periods. The family, age-group and the communities were placed at the centre of helping individuals, social groups and the community to meet their social needs (Iwaremie-Jaja, 1995). Then the indigenous methods, were carried out by extended families, age-group, and through the missionaries in the later part of the 1810. The focuses at that time was to help the poor through charity by offering them gift items and it was strictly based on individualism and casework approach. The missionaries would investigate the applicants and determine their felt-needs and services, and in turn released relief through volunteer family visitors to assess individuals, families and communities in need of social welfare services. By reaching the individual and to restore his or her psychological function by applying diagnostic principle, treatment methods such as casework and counseling were used to help people who suffered from one anomaly or the other (Iwarimie-Jaja, 1995:13).

> The mission stations provides shelter, clothing and food to those in want of these needs. Destitute orphans and delinquents were cared for and provided social welfare

sources of a diverse nature. Many of them were given therapy treatment schooled in missionary schools and allowed to participate in Boys Scout and Girls Guide Clubs.

Apart from the above services, programmes and service for group were also developed by the missionaries to help groups in the communities where they existed. Some of these programmes are voluntary service to the needy person, group and community. To achieve all these, the following services were social groups like the Boys Scouts, Boys Brigade, Girls Guide, Red Cross, Young Women Christian Association (YWCA) and young Men Christian Association (YMCA). Those groups or social organizations helped to bring about the group work approach which is contemporarily adopted in social work agencies in Nigeria, even as a method, and community organization or community work (Iwarimie-Jaja, 2002).

These community groups went about talking to communities and making inquiries of what their needs are and organized them to solve their community problems by themselves. These pre-colonial organizations which used casework, group work and community work approach aimed at problem-solving at the individual, group, and community levels. In furtherance of desire to adopt the reality methods of practicing social work gave birth to additional method, such like social action, social welfare research, and social welfare. Administration and the search for global and scientific approach of executing social work practice continue to bother the workforce till the latest innovation emerged known as Evidence-Based-Practice (EBPs). It is the desire of the research to examine each of these methods which has judiciously be carried out earlier.

Conclusion

Going by the various methods elucidated above, it is glaring that a lot is needed to achieve the much-need desire in social work practice. And that should agitate the minds of all African countries represented in this conference especially in adopting the recent innovation in the field known as evidence based practiced. It is the thinking of the researcher that if the conference decides to adopt it as working document it will go a long way in addressing the epileptic methods which most of us seem to adapt ourselves. And doing so, the practitioners workforce is social work domain will have to be trained and retrained on the dynamism of EBPs programme. This will make the professionals not only attractive their calling but remain relevant in the global need for services of a social worker.

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