

Sociology of Mental Illness: The Study of the Un-institutionalized Mentally Challenged in Abeokuta, Ogun State. Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper focuses on the poor non-institutionalized and socially classified as mentally challenged people who roam the streets of Abeokuta, the capital of Ogun State, Nigeria. It is a down- to- earth study and observation of this group of people in the habitat they have been forced to accept as "normal". It addresses the issue of mental illness as a social construction with the belief that the behaviors are manifestations of the failure of society to assist people to cope with social expectations as defined by the social institution. The study is of the view that human behavior can be modified with medications, social and psychological behavior approaches. It was discovered that these people survive under very harsh conditions despite the fact that they are stigmatized, abused, sexually harassed and subjected to homelessness. This revelation reinforces the authors view that "the mentally challenged" could be assisted retrained to leave normal lives is endorsed.