

SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND CULTURE

GNS 111/103

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COURSE OUTLINE

1. **Explanation and Definitions of Social Problem**
2. **Sociological Perspectives of social problem**
3. **Difference between social problems and individual problems**
4. **Types of Social Problems in Nigeria**
5. **Social Problems-Causes and Solution**
6. **Culture**
 - What is culture?**
 - Types of culture**
 - Characteristics of culture**
 - Functions of culture in the society**
 - Concepts of culture**
7. **Conclusion and Revision**

SOCIAL PROBLEM

Corruption

Armed robbery

Cyber crime

Prostitution

Rape-Child

rape

Single parenting

Examination Malpractice

Inadequate Power supply

Hunger



AIM OF THIS COURSE



This course will explain what social problems are; differentiate between social problems and personal problems; identify the different types of social problems in Nigeria; point out the causes of social problems and suggest possible solutions.

The course will also address the sociological perspective in the explanation of social problems. Furthermore, this course will expose students to the concept of culture, its types, characteristics, functions, elements and other related terms with particular attention on Nigeria.

WHAT IS A SOCIAL PROBLEM?



Social problem, like every social concept, has been defined in various ways and arising from different sociological perspectives.

However, the following definitions will aid the understanding of what social problem is.



DEFINITIONS OF SOCIAL PROBLEM

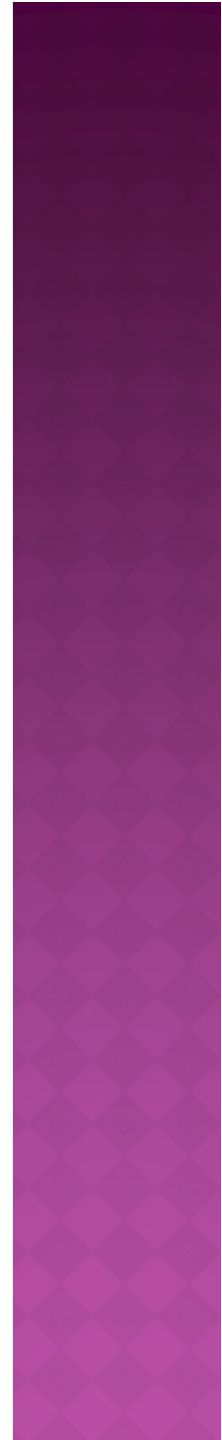




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TERRORISM

NIGERIA'S POTENTIAL ENEMY



- ◉ Social problem is a condition that undermines the well-being of all members of a society and that is usually a matter of public debate
- ◉ Social problem simply is a problem that poses a threat to the survival, continuity, health and prosperity of a society.
- ◉ A social problem is recognised as a condition that has been “incorporated into a community’s or organisation’s agenda for action.”
- ◉ A social problem is a phenomenon that disturbs society, prompts for social action and intervention and that requires government’s response.

- ⦿ A social problem is a behaviour or circumstance that is not regarded as desirable, acceptable and dangerous within a group, community or society. It is regarded as deviations from community or societal norms e.g. prostitution, killing, corruption, terrorist acts, armed robbery activities, and others.
- ⦿ Social problems are widespread and intense worries that collectively demand leadership, social attention and intervention.
- ⦿ A social problem is a social condition that a segment of society views as harmful to members of society and in need of remedy.

SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON SOCIAL PROBLEM



Sociologists explain what social problem is from their own point of view. Here we will explain the sociological perspectives on social problem, they include:

- ◉ Functionalist Perspective
- ◉ Conflict Perspective
- ◉ Interactionist Perspective
- ◉ Feminist Perspective



FUNCTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE



Functionalist perspective explains how different parts of the society work together for the normal functioning of the whole. **Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parson** were the early sociologists who contributed in propounding the functionalist theory.

From the functionalist view, social problems are functional in the society. Simply put, functionalists see social problems as serving a function in society. That social problems have a role to play in the society. For instance, crime, as a social problem, can engender solidarity in a group or society to fight it.

Besides, crime is the reason we have the Police force, paramilitary and other security agencies who are employed to checkmate the threat crime poses in the society. Without crime and criminals, therefore, these people will lose their jobs.

CONFLICT PERSPECTIVE



The conflict perspective is usually traced to **Karl Marx**. Conflict theorists view the problems in society as being the uneven outcome of competition among various interest groups for limited resources.

This struggle takes many forms, often putting more powerful groups with little concern for general social interests, against less powerful but directly affected groups. For instance, political violence is instigated by powerful forces (leaders) in the society to enforce their selfish and “particularistic” desire on the general interest of members of society.

In addition, ethnicity has become a vehicle for the expression of ethnic dominance in particular areas in Nigeria. Many political leaders will seek to promote the welfare and interests of the ethnic group they represent as against the general well-being of the country. Thus, promoting conflict in the society.



INTERACTIONIST PERSPECTIVE



Interactionist perspective also known as symbolic interactionist perspective, focusing on how people “subjectively” define reality, interactionists examine how values, shared expectations, and perceptions apply to social problems in a society. This perspective was developed from thoughts of **George Herbert Mead**.

This means that social problems can be interpreted to be so based on the values of a people, their individual perceptions and expectations.

For instance, another man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter or martyr. Another good example is that some people in Africa and in some parts of the world still believe that HIV-AIDs does not exist and that it is a mere ploy by the West to deny African people the pleasures they can derive from sexual activities.

FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE



Ann Oakley has been a prominent figure in the development of feminism in Sociology. Feminists view society as being structured along gender lines. It is projected that females are disadvantaged in the society. Thus, according to this theory, women and girls are victims of the different social problems that exist in society. This is the reason for the clamour for gender equality in Nigeria.

For instance, feminists believe that war is caused by men but that women, girls and children bear the negative consequences more than men.

Furthermore, the feminist theory canvasses on the issue of poverty, that the society is masculinised and gendered in such a way that women are the ones that suffer most, they are not employed like the men, lack education and training and suffer from family violence- violence against women.



TYPES OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN NIGERIA



- ◉ Kidnapping,
- ◉ Poverty,
- ◉ Armed robbery,
- ◉ Examination malpractices,
- ◉ Rape,
- ◉ Violence against women,
- ◉ Terrorism,
- ◉ Unemployment,
- ◉ Drug abuse,
- ◉ Prostitution,
- ◉ HIV-AIDs,
- ◉ Child abuse
- ◉ Divorce,



- ◉ Single parenting,
- ◉ Religious fundamentalism,
- ◉ Cyber-crime - yahoo yahoo and other internet fraud,
- ◉ Tribalism,
- ◉ Teenage pregnancy,
- ◉ Examination malpractices,
- ◉ Corruption,
- ◉ Illiteracy, and others



SOCIAL PROBLEMS

CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS





CYBER CRIME



Cyber crime is dubious criminal act perpetrated via the internet, using the computer and/mobile phone.

Types of cyber crime: Hacking, Financial fraud, impersonation etc.

Causes

- ◉ Get-rich quick syndrome
- ◉ Lack of profitable imitative by the youth and perpetrators of the act
- ◉ Societal/ peer influence

Solution

- ◉ Employment of youth
- ◉ Educating the youths on the ill associated with the crime
- ◉ Government should put in place laws to check and control this act
- ◉ Offenders should be brought to book and punished



PROSTITUTION



Prostitution is the act of engaging in sexual intercourse in exchange for money, a gesture, a favour or offering another person for such purposes. Although it may be the world's oldest profession, prostitutes are also called sex workers while their managers are referred to as pimps

Causes

- ⦿ - Lack of education/illiteracy
- ⦿ - Child Trafficking
- ⦿ - Poverty
- ⦿ - Unemployment
- ⦿ -Peer group influence
- ⦿ - Social stigmatization e.g. social outcasts

Solutions

- ⦿ - Education and literacy
- ⦿ -Teaching victims job and economically viable skills
- ⦿ - Creation of employment for victims and women in the society
- ⦿ - Legal Prohibition and punishment of offenders, sponsors and pimps
- ⦿ -Sex education
- ⦿ -Destruction of houses where prostitute converge



DRUG ABUSE



Drug abuse refers to using any illegal substance or a legal substance (as a prescribed drug) in a way that goes contrary to the medical practices or prescription.

Such legal drugs include: analgesics-tramadol, cough syrups such as codeine while illegal drugs include: cocaine, Indian humps, cannabis etc.

- ◉ Who is the minister of health in Nigeria?
- ◉ What is the meaning of the acronym- **NAFDAC**?

Causes

- ◉ Lack of proper knowledge on how to administer and use drugs
- ◉ Peer group influence on the abused drugs
- ◉ Improper use of drugs

Solution

- ◉ Drugs should be sold based on a medical prescription
- ◉ Educating people on the effects of drug abuse
- ◉ Federal government should help implement laws that can control drug abuse
- ◉ Sellers and users of illegal drugs should be punished

TERRORISM

NIGERIA'S POTENTIAL ENEMY



TERRORISM



Terrorism - extreme violence or threat of violence that could harm innocent people involving such acts as kidnapping, bombing (suicide bombing inclusive), assassination and plane hijack, carried out for political or other purposes/reasons.

Causes

- ⦿ - Criminal minded individuals
- ⦿ - Political groups and interests
- ⦿ - Religious or political fundamentalism
- ⦿ - Injustice and social inequality
- ⦿ - Marginalisation and political and economic exclusion
- ⦿ - Porous border security

Solutions

- ⦿ - Effective border patrol and security
- ⦿ - Political inclusion and popular rule
- ⦿ - Responsive and responsible leadership
- ⦿ - Welfare of citizens
- ⦿ - Equilibrium in the distribution or allocation of resources



EXAMINATION MALPRACTICES



Examination malpractices - these are practices that fall below the required standards acceptable for passing examinations and involve the use of external materials, the use of “mercenaries” or impostors and other malpractices that help a student or students to pass their examinations.

Causes

- ⦿ - Laziness of students
- ⦿ - Lack of study
- ⦿ - Parental negative influence
- ⦿ - Fallen social morals and values
- ⦿ - Fallen standards of education
- ⦿ - Corrupt teachers and education officials

Solutions

- ⦿ - Promotion of morality and values in the society and educational institutions
- ⦿ - Meritocracy
- ⦿ - Parental guidance and example
- ⦿ - Hard work and personal responsibility
- ⦿ - Reforms in educational institutions

CULTURE



The image features a background of the Nigerian national flag, which consists of three vertical stripes of green, white, and green. The word "Nigeria" is written across the bottom in a large, stylized, serif font. The letters are white with a green outline, and the 'i' has a green dot. The text is positioned over the white stripe of the flag. There are purple decorative elements in the top right and bottom right corners of the image.

Nigeria







WHAT IS CULTURE?



What is Culture?

The main approaches to the culture definition are general. The essence of a sociological approach to the study of culture definition is, firstly, the disclosure of societal relationships and regularities of the functioning and development of culture and, secondly, to identify its social functions.

Culture in sociology is regarded primarily as a collective and ubiquitous concept. Culture is a term that has many different meanings. However, the following are various ways culture has been defined.



- ◉ Culture has also been defined as an integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon the capacity for symbolic thought and social learning.
- ◉ Culture distinguishes groups in the society.
- ◉ Culture is considered to be group-specific behaviour that is acquired, at least in part from social influences. Here, group is considered to be the species-typical unit whether it be a troop, lineage, subgroup, or so on.
- ◉ Culture is the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterises an institution, organization, group or society.

- ◉ Culture means the whole complex of traditional behaviour which has been developed by the human race and is successively learned by each generation.
- ◉ Culture is a community's customs, rituals and belief systems developed over time.
- ◉ Culture can also mean the forms of traditional behaviour which are characteristic of a given society, or of a group of societies, or of a certain race, or of certain area, or of a certain period of time.
- ◉ Culture is the socially transmitted knowledge and behaviour shared by some group of people.

TYPES OF CULTURE



There are two types of culture:

Material culture and Non-material culture

- ◉ **Material culture** is that aspect of culture that we can see and handle e.g. clothes, costumes, drums, etc.
- ◉ **Non-material culture** is that aspect of culture that cannot be seen or touched e.g. values, customs, beliefs, folklore, etc.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURE



1. Culture is dynamic.
2. Culture is universal.
3. Culture is not inborn; it is shared and learnt.
4. Culture is overt and covert. It is divided into material and non-material aspects.
5. Culture is transferable from one generation to another.
6. Culture is symbolic: It is based on the purposeful creation and usage of symbols; it is exclusive to humans.



FUNCTIONS OF CULTURE



1. It ensures and guarantees the continuity of the society.
2. It aids uniformity among certain groups of people in the society.
3. Culture determines how people behave and live.
4. It differentiates one society from another.



ELEMENTS OF CULTURE

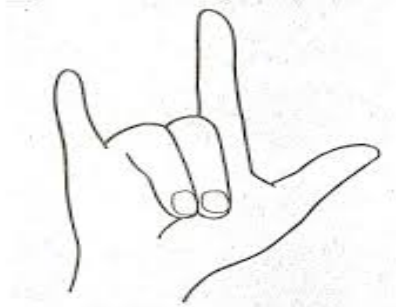
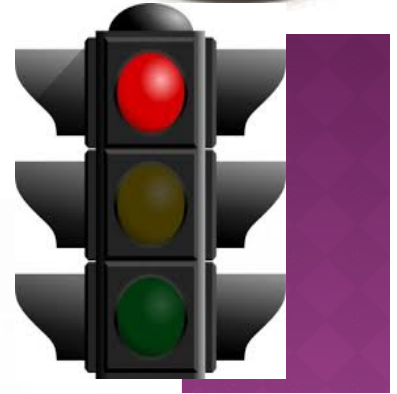


Elements of Culture

1. Customs
2. Language
3. Symbols
4. Folkways
5. Mores
6. Norms
7. Values
8. Laws



SYMBOLS



I Love You!



CONCEPTS IN CULTURE



1. **Ethnocentrism** - this stands for the situation when a group or individual feels their material or non-material culture is better than others e.g. when a Yoruba man feels his dressing is better than those from other ethnic groups.
2. **Sub-culture** - is a distinctive culture shared by a group within a larger society e.g. Igbo culture is a sub-culture to the general culture in the Nigerian society.
3. **Cultural relativism** - this is the uniqueness of the culture of a group which contains peculiar pattern of behaviour which may seem alien to people from other cultural background. For instance, the beating of grooms in the Fulani culture as a test of courage, fearlessness and masculinity falls into this group.
4. **Culture shock** - this is the psychological and social maladjustment at micro or macro level that is experienced for the first time when people encounter new cultural elements such as new things, new ideas, new concepts, seemingly strange beliefs and practices e.g. mini skirt, terrorism, suicide bombers, exposure of women's breasts in the public, etc. are examples of cultural shock to some people in Nigeria.

REVISION



1. Explain, what is “social” about social problem?
2. How would you distinguish between social and individual problems?
3. What social problems do you think is prominent in Nigeria? Give reasons for your answer.
4. Write an essay on corruption as a social problem in Nigeria. Identify its causes and possible solutions.
5. Do you agree that examination malpractice is a social problem? Give your reasons.
6. Which of the sociological perspectives do you think has the best interpretation of social problems in Nigeria?
7. Do you think that your culture is better than others? Explain.
8. Write extensively on the cultural life of your ethnic group.
9. Culture is not innate; it is learned. Discuss.
10. Is culture actually necessary? Support your position with practical examples.

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT TEST

QUESTIONS - CHAPTER SIX, PAGE 162

15 MINUTES

- ◉ Define culture according to Giddens, 2001 and Kessing, 1981
- ◉ State four (4) characteristics of culture
- ◉ List eight (8) elements of culture and explain one (1)
- ◉ Explain with example:
 - i) Ethnocentrism
 - ii) Culture relativism