

INTRODUCTION

Ageing is a process of becoming older, it is a particular length or stage of life. It relates to humans, animals and plants. According to United Nations and World Health Organization, older person in Africa begins from the age of 60 years and above. Older persons need adequate care and supports to help them have fun filled lives and to take their minds off thinking. In the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria, Section 14. 2(b) which states categorically that, "The security and welfare of its people shall be the primary purpose of the government" and in Section 16, sub-section 2(d) promises, "That suitable and adequate shelter and suitable and adequate food, reasonable national minimum living wage, old age care and pensions and unemployment, sick benefits and welfare of the disabled are provided for all citizens." Unfortunately, the government seems to have reneged on these promises as most elderly are not covered by any social security scheme. The only beneficiaries are those in formal employment who have pension benefits which are inadequate and often delayed due to corruption in the pension system. And as Magnus Eze, Director, Parlia Consult rightly observed, "No government policy or legislation is in place with which government can provide for the aged.

"EQUALITY AND NON –DISCRIMINATION": The older people have the right to enjoy life like younger persons, the rights of citizens to live, associate, enjoy social and infrastructural amenities should be extended to older persons. In South West Lagos and Oyo State older people categorize ageing with **"inability to do hard work"**, hence the need for Government agencies to enact laws to protect the rights of older persons. Discriminations on the part of the older people are on the increase due to many factors such as economic imbalance, social vices e.t.c.

"Neglect": It has been observed that older people in rural communities across Geo- Political zones in Nigeria face neglect from either members of families, friends and distant relatives. Often times, majority of older people who are more than 100 years old in Nigeria suffer the most because of the stereotype believe in whoever lives over 100 years are spending extra years and are bound to be abandoned by relatives, friends and families. Some elderly members live in destitution and are often left at the mercy of the public or good Samaritans

"Violence and abuse of older persons": Violence against older persons is a global phenomenon, several calls have been made by Civil Society Organizations, non –Governmental Organization to shun this act as it affect greatly our societies. Elderly people are abused both physically and psychologically by family members and other care givers. Some of them have challenges of poverty and diseases of old age such as stroke, depression, dementia, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. Because of their frailty, they depend on their families and other caregivers for care and in the process are abused. Also in the absence of institutional care, adult children who

are too busy to take care of their parents hire caregivers who also maltreat them. Unfortunately, the elderly are unable to challenge their abusers and have no way of reporting their abuse and so many suffer in silence. Nigeria has the largest number of elderly people over 60years of age, South Sahara Africa, yet there is very little way of Government institutional policies and legislation or even implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action on Aging, to which it is a signatory. For now, families continue to bear the burden of caring for their elderly members but this is increasingly difficult for them.

SOLUTION:

The Nigerian Government should revisit our constitution by making provision for the older ones in government policies, **“THEY ARE PART OF US”** and we also call on Civil Society Groups across our Nation to come up with campaign plans that promote care for the older persons and regular awareness that addresses the issue.

Asabe Shehu Yar’Adua Foundation has addressed the Media on campaign for the care of the older persons .The Foundation has visited various old peoples’ home for donations and regular sensitization talks on healthy life styles.

Resources

The definitions and Onset of an Old Person in South-Western Nigeria **Professor Fadayomi Theophilus Oyeyemi** *Head, Department of Economics, Faculty of Humanities and Management Sciences and etal, HelpAge International*, Patience Edirin Ukiri Mudiare, PhD Department of Sociology Ahmadu Bello University Zaria ,American International Journal of Contemporary Research Centre for promoting ideas, Wikipedia.