

Book Review

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Mel Gray and Solomon Amadasun (2023). *Social Work, Social Welfare, and Social Development in Nigeria: A Postcolonial Perspective*. New York: Routledge, 2023; 208 pss. ISBN.978-1-032-46528-9(hbk): £96.00.

This book offers a comprehensive exploration of social work, social welfare, and social development in Nigeria, examined through a postcolonial lens. It sheds light on the role of social work within Nigeria's minimalist welfare structure and the challenges it faces in gaining recognition and legitimacy. It contains ten chapters inclusive of Introduction and Conclusion. Facets of Social Welfare in Nigeria include: (1) development of social welfare and social work; (2) social development; (3) child welfare system; (4) social exclusion, gender, and disability and social work response; (5) aging and mental health; (6) approach to human trafficking; (7) social work and its quest for professional recognition; (8) social work education; and (9) conclusion. The reviewer has followed Mel Gray's work with emphasis on her insightful discussions on international social work, encompassing universalization, localization, and colonization perspectives.

The Global Definition of Social Work Profession was approved by the IFSW General Meeting and the IASSW General Assembly in July 2014, which stated as follows: "The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels." This appears to be the fruition of the discussions raised consistently by the main author and her colleagues.

Until recently, numerous countries have mimicked the educational structure of American and European social work theory, often giving the impression of socio-academic colonization. Social work has its origins in spirituality, but on modernization, the pursuit of science has distanced it from that source. Nonetheless,

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there has been an emerging trend toward indigenization, where local cultural and spiritual elements are being integrated. Therefore, critical reflection becomes indispensable in facilitating a meaningful dialog between the universality of social work and the process of indigenization.

This book investigates its subject matter in contextually relevant research. While much of the reviewed literature emanates from Africa where postcolonial and decolonizing perspectives are gaining momentum, such discussions remain rare in Japanese social work. However, Japan is not immune to the influence of colonization, especially concerning Western literature. Although the social welfare system in Japan is improving, and issues such as human trafficking, prevalent in Nigeria, are less common, there are notable parallels in postcolonial structures. It may be worthwhile to examine many issues with a comparative view.

During the revision of Japan's Social Work Code of Ethics, efforts were made to align with the International Federation of Social Workers' guidelines. Also, in social work education, the necessary use of terms such as "contract" and "self-determination" from a Western context does not seamlessly fit within an Asian perspective. Additionally, American history often receives extensive coverage in social work texts, while Japan's history is insufficiently addressed.

An intriguing development in Japan is the advocacy for Buddhist-based social work, exploring the possibilities of social work rooted in Asian cultures and traditions, distinct from Western models, by leveraging its potential in Buddhism. Combining this approach with international discussions may open up broader and more diverse prospects for the field of social work.

In sum, this book provides a comprehensive examination of Nigeria within the context of universalization, localization, and colonization perspectives, making it relevant to an international audience. While its focus is on Nigeria and Africa in a broader context, it resonates with experiences in Japan and Asia, and is likely to resonate with social workers worldwide.