

CHANGING PATTERN OF CARE AND SUPPORT FOR THE AGED LIVING IN AKUNGBA-AKOKO, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

The 2003 National Demographic Health Survey (NDHS) on Nigeria shows that the ratio between the aged and younger family care givers is declining. Coupled with these are the changes in the family structure and the traditional mechanisms for care and support for the aged with implication on their well-being. This paper, therefore, examined the pattern of changes in the care and support for the aged in Akungba-Akoko Nigeria; factors responsible for these changes, effects of the changes on the well-being of the aged and coping strategies employed to cushion the impact of changes on their well-being.

Data collection was basically qualitative. in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, case studies and observational techniques. In all, 27 in-depth interviews were conducted (four each with aged men and women (rural, semi-urban); two each with male and female caregivers (rural, semi-urban) and three with service providers. Eight FGDs were carried out (one each with aged men and women (rural, semi-rural) and one each with male and female caregivers (rural, semi-rural). Meetings with aged men and women were also observed and recorded. Data collected were sorted, transcribed and reported through content analysis. In some instance, descriptive statistics were employed to quantify responses.

Findings from the study show a declining process in the traditional care and support systems for the aged as a result of the change in perception of ageing/oldage that influences care and support for the aged. Western influence, diminishing extended family ties, urban migration, women entry into paid employment and economic depression impacted negatively on care and support for the aged. Respondents (13%) reported the

following coping mechanisms, selling their personal belongings, alms begging, working for other people and depending on social service providers like church and local governments.

The paper concludes that the changes in the care and support for the aged impede on their well-being hence, the need to give attention to these changes in order to sustain the well-being of the aged in Nigeria.

Keywords: well-being, old age, extended family, change, migration.