

Counselling and Population Control in Nigeria

Monday Ehikioya Omohan and Agnes Ebi Maliki*

*Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Ambrose Alli University,
Ekpoma, Nigeria*

**Educational Foundation Department, Faculty of Education, Niger Delta University,
Wilberforce Island 560001, Bayelsa State, Nigeria*

KEYWORDS Fertility. Traditional And Internalized Attitudes. Education. Counselling System

ABSTRACT In 1988, the Federal government of Nigeria, under the Military presidency of Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, introduced a National Population policy targets for the country. The main focus of the policy target was on how to control or reduce the population growth rate of the country. Eight out of the ten specific objectives were directed on how to reduce the level of fertility and one on how to reduce the mortality rate, particularly the infant mortality rate. When one examines the present population situation of Nigeria vis-à-vis the National Population targets expectations, it is clear that not much has been achieved. The question that comes to any one evaluating the situation is, why has these objectives of the policy being difficult to realized. The simple but not too obvious reason is that policy formulators failed to appreciate the difficulties associated with attempts at changing traditional and internalized attitudes, habits, beliefs and behaviour of people. For example, how easily can you make people to appreciate the need for a woman to have only four children in a lifetime marriage, where a large family size is a cherished and valued thing around the people? How do you make government officials (who are the implementors of government policies) to be more committed to their duties, be less corrupt in order for the policy implementation to succeed? Changing internalized habits and beliefs require a long and consistent education. Such education when channeled through a well organized counselling system will achieve better result. Thus, the role of counselors in the desire for a reduced population growth rate by any Nation should not be over looked or undermined. This paper presents the relationship between population control and counselling processes, particularly for a country like Nigeria.