

PROFESSIONALIZATION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *The focus of the paper is on professionalization of community development with its challenges and prospects in Nigeria. The paper explored the concept of professionalization as a process by which any trade, work or occupation transforms itself into a profession of high standards, integrity and competence in human environment. The paper identified the characteristics of professionalization to include educational and professional qualifications, training, area of specialization, formal certification, code of conduct, establishment of professional body, self regulatory association among others. The paper identified lack of professional culture, lack of interest to promote professionalization of community development, weak professional association, lack of control entry among others as the challenges which militate against professionalization of community development in Nigeria. The paper identified establishment of appropriate educational qualifications, appropriate professional body, self regulatory association, code of conduct, employment of community development professionals and issuance of operational licence to community development professionals as some of the prospects of professionalization of community development in Nigeria. The paper recommends among other things a policy framework to enact a law to make the practice of community development an exclusive domain of community development professionals to practice their profession, entrenchment of professional values and issuance of operational licence to only qualified community development professionals to practice community development as a profession in Nigeria.*

KEYWORDS: Professionalization, Community, Development Challenges, Prospects.

INTRODUCTION

The advocacy for professionalization of community development is a worthwhile call to enhance the practice of community development in Nigeria. This innovative initiative will entrench the principle of an efficient and effective service delivery by community development professionals who have received the required high level of education and training needed to enable them to practice community development as a profession in Nigeria. The implication of this is that the window for quacks in community development as a profession will be closed in Nigeria.

Consequently, the professional initiative will encourage only the qualified professionals to practice community development as a profession in Nigeria. It is hoped that this professional mandate of community development professionals will help to sanitize the practice of community development as a profession in Nigeria. This innovative idea of professionalization, though with its own challenges will help to standardize the practice of community development in Nigeria. This, indeed, calls for a code of conduct for the practice of community development as a profession.

The professionalization of community development will entrench a professional culture that will not accommodate quacks to practice the profession again in Nigeria. The call for professionalization of community development will usually receive stiffer resistance from quacks and non-professionals who are entruders in community development as a profession. This trend of allowing non-professionals to practice community development should be reversed now to enable the people who have acquired the relevant knowledge and skills in community development to practice their chosen profession in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine issues of professionalization of community development as a distinct area of study which should develop into a profession of high standard, integrity and competence that is to be driven by a code of conduct or code of ethics in Nigeria. Specifically, the study identifies a number of characteristics, challenges and prospects of professionalization of community development which will ultimately reposition community development as a profession for more effective service delivery in Nigeria.

Concept of Professionalization

The concept of professionalization simply means the process by which any trade, work or occupation transforms itself as a profession of high standards, integrity and competence in the society. The concept of professionalization is, indeed, a process by which people who want to practice certain jobs or work engage in high level education and training in order to be certified professionally qualified and competent enough to practice their chosen profession in human environment.

The concept of profession is defined as a job or work which requires a high level of education and training in the society. Schaefer (2005) defines the concept of profession as work which requires extensive knowledge that is governed by a code of conduct. Essentially, every profession is expected to have its own code of conduct or code of ethics which governs it in human environment.

The concept of profession can also be defined as a job, work, trade or occupation which requires specialized knowledge and skills for people to acquire in order to provide the services required of the profession. In the views of Dienye (2012) a profession is defined as a trade or vocation that requires specialized knowledge and skills which are important for the performance of the functions required of the profession. The implication of this is that profession requires high level of education and training to enable people to acquire the specialized knowledge and skills in order to provide the needed services in human environment.

Justification for the Research

The study on professionalization of community development is a worthwhile initiative for the development and enhancement of professional practice in community development. Professionalization of community development becomes imperative since it will entrench professional code of conduct or code of ethics and encourage regular interactions of community development professionals in various professional fora to explore ways of promoting effective service delivery in their chosen profession in human environment.

Without professionalization of community development as a profession, it is obvious that the profession will have identity crisis in Nigeria. This becomes overt when issues of common interest that concern community development as a profession require to be driven by a unified functional professional body or an association as seen in other professional bodies or associations such as Nigerian Medical Association (NMA), Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) among others.

The Characteristics of Professionalization

The characteristics of professionalization in the contemporary society are the followings:

Educational and Professional Qualifications

Professionalization is characterized by established acceptable educational and professional qualifications in the contemporary human environment. The process of professionalization, indeed, tends to encourage people who wish to practice certain jobs, work, trades, vocation or profession to engage in high level education and training in order to enable them to be certified professionally qualified and competent to practice a particular chosen profession in the society. Schaefer (2005) rightly notes that profession is characterized by systematic body of knowledge. Essentially, professionalization is characterized by extensive knowledge which is anchored on a number of theoretical and practical dispositions of teaching and learning in the society.

It is appropriate to establish qualification for community development practitioners in Nigeria as a developing country. This will help to facilitate the process of professionalization of community development with a strong mandate to ensure that community development is not taken over by unqualified people who are working in various corporate organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and governmental establishments including educational institutions as well as community development in various areas of human endeavour in the society.

Fundamentally, professionalization of community development is characterized by well articulated theoretical knowledge which is reinforced with practical disposition of teaching and learning in human environment. Professionalization of community development is an organized sequentially arranged teaching and learning activities which stimulate bringing about changes in information, understanding, knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to conscientise people to identify, prioritize and solve community problems with a view to improving their living conditions in various communities in the society. Professionalization is guided by learning programmes depending on the choice of profession. Nwanna-Nzewunwa (2001) asserts in citing Leggate that the criteria for assessing professionalization are the followings:

- i. A practice of profession is established based on relevant theoretical and esoteric knowledge.
- ii. The acquisition of professional knowledge requires a long period of education and socialization.
- iii. That there is careful control over training, certification, standards of practice as well as recruitment in the society.

It is appropriate that professionals have a common knowledge of their profession in order to enable them to practice their chosen profession. Egbezor (2012) clearly affirms that people as professionals must possess a common type of knowledge to practice in the society. Nwanna-Nzewunwa (2001) remarks that the knowledge which a professional acquired is a good mastery of knowledge that is related to his area of interest in the society. The desire for a common knowledge by professionals is imperative in their various chosen professions in human environment.

Training

Training is equally among the important characteristics of professionalization in the society. The concept of training can be defined as the process of teaching people the skills for a particular work, job or activity in the society. Training should not be regarded as a substitute for education which is a much broader process of stimulating human resource development in the society. Pratt and Boyden (1985) state that training should not be considered as education or should not be a substitute for education. Essentially, training is more immediate goal-oriented to enable the recipients address the prevailing problems or challenges confronting people in the society. Pratt and Boyden (1985) assert that training has narrower and more immediate goals which are related in order to enable people to acquire relevant specific skills that are usually transferable into a work or leisure activity in the society. They further note that education is a much broader process of promoting human development.

A high level of training or well structured training is required in various professions in the society. Dienye (2012) notes that the acquisition of professional skills requires a prolong period of intensive and vigorous training that involves the acquisition of both theoretical and practical knowledge in the society. In the views of Schaefer (2005) training is extensive and formalized in a number of professions in the society. This will enable various professionals who are engaged in various professions to acquire relevant knowledge and skills of doing things in the contemporary knowledge and technological-driven global environment.

Understandably, training is not a wasteful expenditure in an organization. Training is an investment in an organization in the society. This is because when an organization invests in human resource development, it certainly facilitates every other thing the organization wants to achieve in its services in the society. The professionals require specific period of time for specific trainings in order to update their knowledge in human environment. Nwanna-Nzewunwa (2001) observes that professionals require a specified length of time for training to acquire relevant knowledge and skills. The community development professionals, indeed, are required to go for specific trainings in order to update their knowledge and skills with the recent research findings and technological innovations in the contemporary global environment. This scenario applies to every profession in human environment. It, therefore, becomes obvious for every profession to ensure that appropriate training and re-training are given to its members in order to get them updated with relevant knowledge and skills, especially in the contemporary global technological environment that will enable them to enhance their productivity and effective service delivery.

Area of Specialization

Another important characteristic of professionalization is area of specialization of professionals in their chosen professions. Area of specialization simply means an activity or area of study which a person knows a lot about as an expert, authority or specialist. The

degree of specialization is well pronounced in various professions in the society. The professionalization process tends to establish certain specific areas of specialization and interest for professionals to engage in further studies in their chosen professions. The knowledge which a professional acquires shows a good mastery of knowledge that is related to his or her area of interest in the society (Nwanna-Nzewunwa, 2001). The successful completion of specific area of specialization and interest by a professional guarantees his or her professional certification as a consultant and an authority of high repute in the chosen profession.

Formal Certification

Professionalization is equally characterized by formal certification of people that they are allowed to do a certain job or work or practice their chosen profession in the society. The self-regulatory bodies or associations such as Nigerian Medical and Dental Council (NMDC), Council for Regulation of Engineering of Nigeria (COREN) among other professional bodies or associations usually issue licence to deserving members who are certified to be competent enough to practice their chosen professions in the society.

However, the issuing self-regulatory body or association may wish to withdraw the issued licence to operate which it issued to a deserving member if it is proofed beyond all reasonable doubt that the person acted unprofessionally and demonstrated professional incompetency in managing case in his or her chosen profession. The withdrawal of the issued licence or certification from the erring professional is usually momentary to serve as a corrective measure for him or her to practice his or her profession in a very good professional manner. The licence to operate (LOT) which many professional bodies or associations, however, usually issue to their members is renewable.

Code of Conduct

Additionally, code of conduct is an important feature or characteristic of various professions in the society. Each profession has code of conduct or code of ethics as a set of rules that people in a particular profession agree to obey in the society. Dienye (2012) states that it is important that every profession operates under a code of conduct or set of ethics. The code of conduct or a set of ethics guides the conduct of professionals in their chosen professions. Dienye (2012) notes that the code of conduct or code of ethics as a set of rules serves as a check on the actions of professionals. The professionals must, of course, be members of professional bodies or associations. The code of conduct or ethics as a set of rules, undoubtedly, tells people as professionals how to behave in a particular profession in the society.

An Established Professional Body or Association

Professionalization is equally characterized by an established functional professional body or association which, indeed, helps to oversee the general conduct of members of the profession. The functional professional body or association helps to put in place self regulatory mechanism for members of the professional associations. This process of established functional professional body or association ensures that a clear demarcation or distinction is made between the qualified members and unqualified amateurs. Specifically, the demarcation in this very circumstance focuses on professional closure for people who are not qualified to be members of certain professional bodies or associations.

There must be clearly stated demarcation concerning control of entry into professional bodies or associations in human environment. The concept of demarcation simply means the point at which one area of work or responsibility etc ends and another begins (Mayor, 2009). The concept of demarcation in professional occupational environment refers to professional or occupational closure to people who are not qualified to practice the profession or occupation in the society. Therefore, only the people who are qualified are, indeed, allowed to practice the profession. In the views of Dienye (2012) a profession as an organization of professionals or experts in a particular field demands that only the people who possess the required knowledge be allowed to practice in the profession. This simply means professional or occupational closure in human environment. The concept of professional or occupational closure means that the profession or occupation automatically becomes closed to entry from people who are amateur and unqualified in the profession in the society.

Self-Regulatory Body or Association

Another important characteristic or feature of professions can be seen in the activities of self-regulatory bodies or associations which help to regulate the professional conduct of professionals in their chosen professions in the society. The professionalization process of profession guides the conduct of the professionals. The professionalization process of a profession, indeed, helps to establish the laws or code of conduct which guide the activities of the members of the various professional bodies or associations in human environment. Dienye (2012) states that members of professional bodies practice in accordance with the laws which regulate the activities of their professions in the society. Every professional body or association has its specific laws or code of conduct that regulate the activities of members of the professional bodies or associations in human environment.

Essentially, the members of various professional bodies or associations endeavour to conform to the specific laws or code of conduct that guide the activities of their profession in the society. There is usually a professional body or association that regulates the activities of the members of each profession in a country. Consequently, it is the responsibility of each of the self-regulatory bodies or associations of various professions to monitor and enforce conformity to the code of conduct or a set of rules regulating the activities of each professional body or association in a country. Nwanna-Nzewunwa (2001) notes that professionals have code of conduct that prescribes and regulates their action on their respective jobs in the society. The self-regulatory bodies or associations of various professions, indeed, regulate the activities of their members and also check their excesses in the society.

Autonomy of Professional Bodies or Associations

Furthermore, the autonomy of professional bodies or associations is also an important feature or characteristic of various professionals in the society. Apparently, the autonomy of each of the professional bodies, associations or groups offers such a body, group or an association an opportunity to control itself in the society. Schaefer (2005) remarks that professionals have a high degree of autonomy to a certain extent. The implication of this is that professional bodies, associations or groups have to administer or control themselves.

Essentially, the autonomy of professional bodies, associations or groups gives each of them the ability and opportunity to make its own decisions without interference and being controlled by any person in human environment. Schaefer (2005) states that professionals are

not responsible to a supervisor for every action in their profession, and they do not need to respond to the whims of a customer in the course of their work in the society. He further states that professionals are their own authority in deciding what is best for their clients in their profession. Dienye (2012) asserts that professionals are expected to practice their chosen professions without interference. The autonomy of professional bodies, associations or groups is an important element and mechanism to ensure effective administration and control of the concerned professional bodies, associations or groups without necessarily external interference.

Professional Recognition of Public and Client

The professional recognition of public as client is among the characteristics of various professionals in the society. The professionals in various professions usually see the public as client who is subordinate to them in their chosen professions. The public recognition is, however, relative. Dienye (2012) observes that public recognition is relative because of people's different perception of some professions. Whatever is the public perception, the professionals still see the public as client that is subordinate to them. The client in this very circumstance simply means somebody who gets services and advice from a professional in the society.

The professional perception of somebody as a client further indicates that the person is subordinate to the professionals in their various chosen professions in human environment. The implication of this is that the professionals usually see their client as subordinate or someone who has a lower position or less authority than a professional in the profession in the society. Consequently, the public as client seeks the services of a professional as a professional representation to hold brief for him or her in a particular profession where such a person cannot hold brief for himself or herself, because he or she is not a member of the professional body or association.

The Challenges of Professionalization of Community Development in Nigeria

The challenges of professionalization of community development in Nigeria are the followings:

Lack of Professional Culture

Lack of professional culture is seen as a challenge that confronts professionalization of community development in Nigeria. Community development professionals do not have specified mode of dressing for easy identification. The issue of lack of specific mode of dressing for easy identification of community development professionals can be referred to as community development professionals' identify crisis in Nigeria. It is appropriate to have specific mode of dressing of community development professionals for easy identification in Nigeria. The professional culture as a way of life of community development professionals will guide their life or behaviour in the society.

Lack of Interest to Promote Professionalization of Community Development

Lack of interest is equally another challenge which militates against the promotion of professionalization of community development in Nigeria. The community development professionals must see the urgent need to mobilize themselves to come together to rescue community development as a profession from the quacks who have dominated the practice of

the profession in many places, especially in corporate organizations, governmental agencies and establishments as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Nigeria. This trend must be reversed in the country to see that community development professionals are given the opportunity to practice their chosen profession in community development.

Weak Professional Association

Weak professional association is equally identified as another challenge which militates against professionalization of community development in Nigeria. Community Development Association of Nigeria (CDAN) has not been very active in pursuing professionalization of community development in Nigeria. Community Development Association of Nigeria (CDAN) or any other professional association piloting the affairs of Community Development Professionals in Nigeria needs to be strengthened to achieve good results in professionalization of community development in Nigeria. The community development professionals in various areas of human environment need to mobilize themselves to form a formidable association that is inclusive of all the people who are qualified to practice the profession in Nigeria.

Lack of Control Entry

Lack of control entry is also another challenge that confronts professionalization of community development in Nigeria. There should be concerted efforts to stop non community development professionals from engaging in providing professional services in community development. Indeed, non professionals should not be allowed to provide services in community development as it is being done in other professions in human environment. This trend will certainly ensure that quacks are not allowed to practice community development in Nigeria.

Lack of Code of Conduct

Lack of code of conduct or code of ethics presents another challenge to professionalization of community development in Nigeria. Community development as a profession has no code of conduct or code of ethics as a set of rules that community development professionals have to obey in the course of their practice in Nigeria. Dienye (2012) remarks that every profession operates under a code of conduct or code of ethics that guides the conduct of the professionals. Consequently, lack of code of conduct or ethics as a set of rules to guide the behaviour of community development professionals remains a serious challenge to community development professionals in Nigeria.

Lack of Regulatory Body or Association

Lack of regulatory body or association is equally a serious challenge that militates against professionalization of community development in Nigeria. There is overtly no regulatory body or association presently which helps to regulate the professional conduct of community development professionals in Nigeria. This trend needs to be reversed in order to facilitate the process of professionalization of community development in Nigeria. It is, therefore, appropriate to put in place a regulatory body or association to regulate the conduct of community development professionals in the country. Every professional body or association must have its own specific code of conduct or code of ethics to regulate the activities of members of the professional body or association.

Prospects of Professionalization of Community Development in Nigeria

The prospects of professionalization of community development in Nigeria are the followings:

Establishment of Appropriate Qualifications for Community Development

Professionals

The establishment of appropriate qualifications for community development professionals is an important prospect of professionalization of community development in Nigeria. A community development professional requires to obtain a minimum of first degree in community development being admitted into community development association of Nigeria (CDAN) or any other community development professional body as a community development professional in Nigeria. A profession requires that the educational qualifications and trainings for admission into the professional body is strictly adhered to in human environment. Dienye (2012) notes that a profession, indeed, requires that the academic qualifications and period of training for admission to register with a professional body are clearly stated and strictly complied within the society. This will serve as a measure to control entry of quacks and non professionals into community development as a profession.

Professionalization of community development will afford community development professionals an opportunity to develop themselves. Professionalization of community development gives community development professionals an opportunity to engage in lifelong learning. Lifelong learning is a learning process or process of education which continues throughout the duration of life of an individual in human environment. Aruma (2012) remarks that lifelong education as a process of education that continues throughout the life time of a person or duration of a person's life is not new in the society. Titmus (1989) states that lifelong education as a process that continues throughout the duration of life is not, indeed new in the world. Lifelong learning which characterizes human beings in human environment is certainly not new in the society. This becomes obvious since lifelong which characterizes human life is as old as human race.

A professional should, therefore continue to learn throughout the duration of his life in order to remain relevant in the society. It is only a dead person that stops learning. Heath (2010) asserts that when you stop learning the tendency is that you start dying. It is rewarding to engage in lifelong learning. Engaging in lifelong learning encourages professionals to be involved in self-development.

Heath (2010) remarks that self-development keeps people's knowledge and skills relevant in a constant changing workplace in the society. What can community development professionals do to ensure that they do not start dying? The simple answer to this is for the community development professionals to engage in lifelong learning so that they will remain relevant in their chosen profession.

Establishment of Appropriate Professional Body or Association

The establishment of appropriate professional body or association is equally an important prospect of professionalization of community development in Nigeria. The establishment of appropriate professional body or association will offer community development professionals a good platform to operate as members of a professional body or association. Dienye (2012)

states that a professional association should usually operate under auspices of an umbrella body in the society. It is appropriate that members of a profession belong to a professional body where issues of common concern and interest will be discussed. The establishment of an active professional association will certainly promote credibility, commitment and professionalization to deliver quality services in the society. This will ensure that community development professionals will promote a high level of quality delivery of best practice in community development.

The establishment of active professional body will lead to mutual understanding among the community development professionals. Brown (2010) asserts that mutual understanding is always the basis that should lead eventually to a satisfactory agreement in human understandings. Professionals are encouraged to always discover and explore mutual interests in their profession. This will enable them to explore things that are important to them in their various professions in the society.

Establishment of Code of Conduct or Code of Ethics

The establishment of code of conduct or code of ethics is also an important prospect of professionalization of community development in Nigeria. Essentially, every profession has code of conduct or code of ethics which serves as a set of rules that guide the conduct and behaviour of people who are members of the organization or association in human environment. Dienne (2012) states that every profession operates under a code of conduct or set of ethics. The code of ethics or code of conduct helps professionals to maintain good standards.

Establishment of Self-Regulatory Body or Association

The establishment of self-regulatory body or association is another prospect of professionalization of community development in Nigeria. The activities of self-regulatory body or association will help to regulate the professional conduct of community development profession in community development as their chosen profession in Nigeria. In the views of Dienne (2012) members of professional bodies or associations practice their professions in accordance with the laws which regulate the activities of their professions in the society. Every professional body or association has its own specific rules or code of conduct which regulates the activities of members of the professional body or association in the society.

Fundamentally, the members of various professional bodies or associations try to conform to the specific code of conduct or ethics as rules that guide the activities of their profession in the society. There is, therefore, a professional body or association which regulates the activities of the members of each profession in a country. It is, indeed, the responsibility of each of the self-regulatory bodies or associations of various professions to monitor and enforce compliance to the code of conduct, ethics or a set of rules that regulate their actions in their respective jobs in the society. The self-regulatory bodies or associations of various professions certainly regulate and check the activities of their members and their excesses in the course of doing their work in the society.

Promotion of Social Justice

Promotion of Social Justice is an important prospect of professionalization of community development in Nigeria. The professionalization of community development will promote social justice in labour settings in Nigeria. The community development professionals will

use the professionalization of their profession as a good platform to contribute to socio-economic development of the country. A policy framework should be imitated to address social justices through appropriate professionalization. This will create awareness among community development professionals to work collaboratively to reaffirm their resolve to promote community development as a profession that is committed to contribute to improve people's living conditions in various communities in Nigeria. The community development professionals can employ social dialogue mechanism as a strategy to engage relevant stakeholders to discuss issues of common concern.

Issuance of Operational Licence

The issuance of operational licence to community development professionals is equally another important prospect of professionalization of community development in Nigeria. The issuance of operational licence to qualified community development professionals will be adequately coordinated when community development is professionalized in the country. The professionalization of community will, therefore, ensure that licence to operate (LTO) will not be issued to people who are not qualified to practice community development as a profession in Nigeria.

Culture of Freedom of Practice

The culture of freedom of practice is also an important prospect of professionalization of community development in Nigeria. Professionals of various professions freely practice their chosen professions without any interference in the society. Dienne (2012) observed that members of various professions are expected to practice their professions without interference. Their professionals practice their professions according to the code of conduct or code of ethics that regulates the activities of such professions in the society.

Employment of Community Development Professional

The employment of community development to take their rightful positions in labour market is another prospect of professionalization of community development in Nigeria. The professionalization of community development will afford the community development professionals an opportunity to practice community development in various areas of human endeavour in the country. This will reposition community development professionals to takeover the work which quacks and non professionals have so far dominated in corporate organizations, governmental agencies and establishments as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) among others in Nigeria.

Improved Working Conditions of Service for Community Development Professionals

The agitation for improved working conditions of service for community development professionals is another prospect of professionalization of community development in Nigeria. It is pertinent to note that conditions of service has been a serious problem in many professions in human environment. The poor working conditions of service has necessitated the urgent need for professionalization of many professions to enable the concerned professionals to deliberate on issues affecting them in their various professionals in the country. Dienne (2012) remarks that members of a profession ought to know about the stipulated conditions of service as it concerns them. The industrial society (1993) clearly states that a written statement of terms and conditions of employment must be given to all

employees who are in the service of an organization. This usually contains relevant information concerning the conditions of service for a particular profession in a country.

The conditions of service is usually provided at the time the offer of employment is made as this helps to prevent misunderstanding at a later date in the course of work in an organization in the society. The community development professionals will use their platform of professional body- Community Development Association of Nigeria (CDAN) or any other community development professional body in Nigeria to address a number of issues of common concern affecting them in the country.

Implications of the Study

An important implication of this study is an advocacy for professionalization of community development as a unified functional professional body or association in Nigeria. This will help to stimulate consciousness among community development professionals in the course of carrying out their work in Nigeria.

Another implication of the study is to help community development professionals to understand the need to have a unified functional professional body or association where they will have an opportunity as community development professionals to speak with one voice on community development issues in Nigeria. The professionalization of community development will help community development professionals to have a code of conduct or code of ethics to guide the conduct of their members who are qualified to practice the profession in Nigeria.

An additional implication of the study is that community development professionals will be mobilized to look into various issues of common concern in their profession in Nigeria. This will stimulate a strong desire for better conditions of service and the need to employ the use of best practice in order to promote effective service delivery in community development in Nigeria.

Essentially, an implication of professionalization of community development is to offer community development professionals an opportunity to control and manage the affairs of their professional body or association in Nigeria. This will ultimately ensure that community development as a profession is not hijacked by quacks and unqualified people in Nigeria.

It is pertinent to state that no professional can stay alone to function very well in his or her chosen profession in human environment. Consequently, professionals are encouraged to identify and relate with other professionals to function very well as a social group in human environment.

Professionalization of community development fosters professional efficiency and productivity in community development in Nigeria. Professionalization of community development equally helps to secure community development work for qualified community development professionals in the country. Community development will be repositioned through professionalization of community development in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

Professionalization of community development will provide an opportunity to community development professionals to exclusively practice their chosen profession without an interference of quacks and unqualified people as entruders in the profession. The professionalization of community development will, undoubtedly, be guided by a code of conduct or code of ethics. The credibility of a profession depends on its workable code of conduct of the professionals in the society.

Professionalization of community development will not only check the entry of quack in the profession, but will check the excesses of some community development professionals in Nigeria. It should be noted that quacks in community development claim that any literate person can master the dictates of community development with common knowledge. Professionalization of community development will entrench a highly respected professional image on community development as a profession.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made based on issues discussed:

1. A policy framework should be initiated to enact a law to make the practice of community development an exclusive domain of community development professionals to practice their profession. The policy framework should clearly stipulate the platform on which a person who holds a minimum of first degree in community development can operate as a community development professional in Nigeria.
2. The exclusiveness of community development professionals to practice their chosen profession should be enforced with the required law from National Assembly of Federal Republic of Nigeria. This will confer exclusive right to holders of a minimum of first degree in community development to practice community development as a profession in Nigeria.
3. A mechanism should be put in place through appropriate institutional framework to facilitate the registration of Nigerian Community Development Council (NCDC). The NCDC should be charged with the responsibility to oversee the activities of community development professionals' association. A profession develops very fast when the people who are qualified enough to practice it are given an opportunity to practice the profession. This will help to check the excesses of quacks who have virtually taken over the practice of community development as a profession in many corporate organizations, governmental establishments and institutions in Nigeria.
4. Professionalization of community development will entrench professional values to the practice of community development as a profession in Nigeria. This will improve professional practice of community development in Nigeria.
5. Operational licence should not be issued to people who are not qualified to practice community development as a profession in Nigeria. This will help to check the entry of quacks into community development as a profession in Nigeria.

6. Professionalization of community development will promote professional knowledge management. This will be achieved through research and publications in the profession.

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