INFORMATION AND EDUCATION ACCESS FOR PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

BY

Prof Zakari Mohammed, fnla fnim

Department Of Library and Information Science

Faculty Of Education

Ahmadu Bello University

Zaria NIGERIA

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ABSTACT

The paper argued that information begets education and an educated person is not that who memorised fact, theories, philosophies and other aspects of knowledge. Rather, an educated person is that who has accumulated information from which the required knowledge, ideas and experiences " are derived formally and informally and who can know which information is needed, when to get it and where to get it. It submitted that information is anything or instance we come across formally or informally, consciously *or* otherwise that add to our exiting knowledge, experiences, ideas, and skills, The paper discussed the dimensions of conflict and peace, and achieving peace and sustainable development within the context of effective access to information and education. The Nigerian factors in access to information and education, the challenges to effective accesses, and the initiatives needed to meet up to expectation in access to information and education for peace and sustainable development in Nigeria were highlighted. It concluded that, the Nigerian nation has no option other than to accept, embrace, promote and sustain all genuine, realistic, implementable, manageable and accountable efforts, initiatives and programmes aimed at effective access to information and education to domicile peace, security, harmony, justice and sustainable development in the country.

Introduction

It is generally agreed that doing the same thing in the same way and still expect different results especially positively is nothing but absurdity and insanity. Certainly, it will be a miracle to advance and progress in any" dimension when there is inverse relationship between saying/declaration and practice. Thus, when **a** theme of this conference is critically reviewed it points to the need to reflect on how education affects Nigeria peaceful co-existence and sustainable national development.

Essentially, one is said to be educated when he/she is informed formally or informally. Education can be said to be an accumulation of information obtained formally especially through school system or informally from the family and society. Though the concept of information has been opened to different interpretations and meaning, by and large, it can be conceived as anything or instance we

come across formally or informally and consciously or unconsciously that adds positively or otherwise to our existing ideas, knowledge, skills and experiences. The consequences/ by-products of such acts/ interactions lead us to take decisions on our next line of action which could be favourable or otherwise. The basic fact is that, it can never be the same with whosoever is informed and educated accordingly. Thus, the extent to which we are informed and/or educated will largely impact on the way and manner we respond to the stimuli before us, as well as determine why we have to do what, when to do it, how to do it and where to do it. The status of our information acquisition will also impact on our decisions to act or react to whatever is before us, our plans, strategies and implementation approaches. In like manner, education should aim at imparting requisite ideas, knowledge, experiences, skills, competences and values to respond accordingly to the immediate and prospective stimuli in the society-in this case, peace and development required for the improvement and advancement of the quality of life of the individuals, a people, community, society, nations and the world at large.

Dimensions of Conflict

Essentially by its nature and depending on the prevailing circumstances, conflict can be complex and dynamic. As observed by Mohammed, Z (2014), though conflict is often seen as the precursor to crisis and war especially if it's violent, it can positively serve as means of communication to civilly express self without causing injury to the respondent(s). It has been observed that conflict is intrinsic in human relationships especially when it not violent. In another dimension, there can be internal (personal) conflict of self, resulting to:

* Indecision;
* confusion and sometimes embarrassment of self especially when decision has to be taken in situations/cases of choice of available viable options to satisfy an individual's personal predicaments, aspirations, interests and gains.

Such conflicts can be considered positive as they are directly inconsequential to the needs, interests and expectations of the generality of the citizenry, community or society.

On the other hand, there can be conflict of interests, usually subjective, arising not necessarily from poor communication, but due to interpersonal disagreements, incompatibility or differences of:

- interests;
- perceptions and misconceptions;
- ideas and ideals;
- philosophy and ideology;
- religion and culture;
- race and tribal lineage/ pedigree;
- procedures and methodologies;
- processes and practices;
- opinions and expectations;
- understanding and faith;
- love and passion;
- confidence and trust; and
- goals, vision and aspirations; etc.

These are commonly observed and expressed within, between and among people, community, society and nations. They can be satisfactorily resolved immediately or much later without necessarily having to take arms or cause any form of injury to the internally and/ or externally interested parties involved.

Dimensions of Peace

Ironically, it is mostly assumed that the concept and presence of peace in wherever, simply implies absence of war, conflict and crisis. Ideally, peace is better understood from the perspectives of societal/ national:

- stability and steady progress of the environment in focus, and
- the valued development and advancement of a people, community, society and nation devoid of negative encumbrances such as unwanted and unwarranted conflicts, crisis and upheavals.

According to Spinoza (2006), peace is not an absence of war; it is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition of benevolence, trust and justice. Similarly, Howard (1971) remarked that, peace is more than the absence of war. It is also the maintenance of an orderly and just society, orderly in being defended against the violence or extortion of aggressors and just in being defended against exploitation by the more powerful. In another context, Norma n (1947) is of the opinion that peace can be slavery, freedom, subjugation or liberation. He concluded that genuine peace means progress toward a free and more just world. Galtung (1969) associates negative peace with structural violence and unjust consequences. According to him, violence is everything which prevents the full realisation of innate somatic and mental human potentials.

These suggest that peace can be said to be negative when it's conceived within the perspective of absence of war and violent conflict or dispute, unjust consequences of decisions and actions, and structural violence. However, positive peace is said to exist when viewed within the context of non-violence, mutually collected and cooperated power and will as well as maintenance of justice and fair play. Viewed within the framework of dynamic processes rather than on an absolute endpoint, the challenge to peace existence and sustenance squarely lays on the development of effective ways and means of resolving disputes and conflicts devoid of physical violence as well as identification and transformation of the genesis of war and violent conflict or dispute.

Access to Education and Information for Peace and Sustainable Development

According to Bryne(1976), an educated man is not the one who carries in his mind a multitude of isolated facts, but a man who knows how to deal with a fact when he see it, who knows where to look for it, and knows who to consult if he doesn't find it. These abilities will remain when particular facts have been forgotten altogether or have grown vague with the passage of time. In a similar dimension, Charlton (1994) is of the view that education is not how much you have committed to memory or even how much you know. It is being able to differentiate between what you know and what you do not know. It is knowing where to go to find out what you need to know and it is knowing how to use the information you get. These points to the fact that being educated transcend beyond mere acquisition and memorisation of facts, principles, theories and philosophy to encompass being in a state of self-awareness as against ignorance; being humane, able and capable

to seek for information from wherever, whoever and whenever as against arrogance; being information and ICT literate to facilitate information seeking, access and use; and being able to judge which information gotten is relevant and when and where to use it. By extension, these expositions point out the symbiotic relationship between information and education, as more often than not, information begets education.

Indeed, an educated person, irrespective of his/her status, learns and seeks for information continually regardless of the source and means. In effect, the place of conventional and digital libraries and information centres as well as that of librarians and other information service providers in the scheme of education, training, information and knowledge acquisition and utilisation by all and sundry require no more emphasis. Likewise, it is the responsibility of libraries and information centres to go beyond the conventional library and information services provision and strategies to boost them by exploiting the advantages of the Cloud Computing Technology and ICTs to provide varieties of digital information resources and online services to effectively meet the yearnings of their customers regardless of their location and time of request for information access and use to meet up to expectation which include conflict resolution, maintenance of peace and sustain development. The basic questions requiring answers are that, do the information and education acquired or provided regardless of the levels and intensity lead to:

> knowing what to do, how, when and where to do it?;
> knowing what is there and what is not there?;
> knowing how to get what is ours that are not there or available civilly?;
> Knowing our rights and how to gain or regain it civilly?;
> Knowing what is expected to avoid conflict, maintain peace and sustain development?;
> transferring knowledge and skills to others pragmatically, effective and efficiently?;
> acquisition of critical judgement and wisdom to know what is available and relevant?; and
> knowing how to locate, identify, access and effectively utilise relevant information and other bodies of knowledge for self-actualisation and promotion of societal and national integration, peace, progress and development?

It is a natural phenomenon and a basic fact that there exists some cultural, ethical, social, political, economic, educational, knowledge and developmental differences within, in between and among people, communities, societies, organisations, institutions and nations. Such differences could be mild, moderate, critical or extreme. What is critical especially as it relates to the peace, stability, development and advancement of a people, community, society or nation is the extent of the negativity or positivity of the deviations and consequences on the stakeholders? The by-product of provision of equal opportunities for access to information and education by all and sundry in a community and society could lead to steadily peaceful, stable, progressive, productive, developed and advanced people, community, society, and nation where all the stakeholders have equal rights, leverages and opportunities to partake in the schemes for the upliftment of a people, community, society nation and the world at large (Mohammed, Z: 2014). Other things being equal, it has been observed that individuals may fail to acquire the needed education or drop out of school system when the objectives of such education is in variance with their cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspirations in life. Quality education acquired especially through qualitative learning and teaching; appropriate learning and teaching environment and facilities; effective information access and utilisation; as well as operational and proactive curriculum based on relevant skills and knowledge

acquisition in the psychomotor, cognitive and affective domains; and appropriate attitudes and values are needed to ensure youth empowerment, peace, stability, progress and development.

Conceived as an accumulation of information and experiences of/ by individuals, education should be seen as one of the core determinant factors of human capital especially when backed by lifelong learning and continued information access and utilisation that will brings about self-education and training throughout one's lifetime. That we are already in an information society which has transformed global value system to be more of information-centred, effective access to information, education and lifelong learning should be seen as a veritable driver of change and panacea for meeting the challenges of globalisation which include peace, employment, and sustainable development and advancement. Apparently, it has been established that the contemporary economies are currently technologically based and driven by the on-going technological revolution leading to what can be called innovation economies which require the input of other specialists, new working environments and adaptation of new working tools to respond positively and quickly to the changing milieu of local and international labour markets and societal expectations.

Continued access to relevant and appropriate information, education, training and lifelong learning opportunities as at when due should aim at producing individuals with competencies in both hard and soft skills to properly fit into the contemporary local and global economy and labour market for effective contribution to the development and advancement of the changing expectations of the society. It is a fact that the world is increasingly becoming a knowledge-based global society. Thus, with better opportunities for access to information, education and skills acquisition, individuals can obtain better jobs, have better lives to live and will not languish on the state of want; thereby become a cog in the wheel of socio-economic and political progress and development of the society. The rapid technological changes are no doubt pointing to the need for systematic revisits of the focus of education and training curricula at all levels, especially at tertiary institutions, to continually respond to the new societal demands and changes appropriately. Governments, educational institutions and employers of labour should aim at transcending beyond politicking to work the talk so as to enhance the capacity of the existing and would-be labour forces so as to effectively cope with the global challenges which include unemployment, conflict, peace and development.

In coping with the exigencies of the contemporary digital information society propelling the 21$^{!t}$ century global innovations critical for addressing the political and socio-economic transformation of the moments as translated into the need for skilled and high-level workforce, it will be instrumental and necessary to strategically revisit the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to expand and reposition its focus and global development agenda on development of primary education for basic skills development (literacy and numeracy)per se, by re-designing its roadmaps and plan schedules to strategically include higher education curricula/programmes aimed at skills development, better - communication, information and ICT literacy, learning to learn; being economically self-dependant; problem-solving strategies; innovation and innovativeness; teamwork and co-innovation; network and collaboration; entrepreneurship and self-reliance; skills acquisition and employability of their products. Indeed, the future of any progressive economy and its ability to compete favourably in the global socio-economic development lies in the quality and competence of its workforce and available opportunity for access to information, education and lifelong learning.

By and large, development should be geared toward purposeful and value added intervention, empowerment and transformation of the individuals and the society in all human endeavours. The overall concept of development should go beyond mere societal economic prosperity to include the well-being of the individuals, communities and the society at large where the members have a right for freedom of choice in what to engage in at any time. The end result of education systems and attainment at all levels should be the production of job creators rather than job seekers. Thus, the cardinal point for ushering peace, development and advancement in the 21st century society should be provisions for deliberate and strategic innovations that will bring about new socio- economic developments; better life expectancy and livelihood; new and better products; more efficient production systems and methods; good governance and accountability; politico-economic democratisation and civil rights; resource mobilisation and utilisation; better information management, awareness, access and utilisation; effective ICTs applications; meritocracy and transparency; academic freedom; better environment management; better approach to state-building and peace-building; creativeness and innovativeness; and better opportunities for employability and productivity.

The crusade for access to information and education for peace and development should be anchored on improved teaching and learning facilities; library and information services provision; educational curricula and programmes; and availability of adequate professionally qualified teaching and laboratory staff for all the education sectors such as the National Mass Education scheme for non-formal education programme; the conventional formal school systems such as the Primary Education sector; the Higher Education sector such as the Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Mono-technics, and Universities; and the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) sector such as the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). While quoting the communique of the National Workshop on Distance Education in Nigeria held in September 2000 in Abuja, Jegede (2014) submitted that ODL can enhance education as a form of human resource development and satisfy the exceptionally large demand for education by our huge and rapidly expanding population which is still mainly rural, remote, under-represented, and marginalised through resources, location, economic and other reason. Distance education will enable Nigeria to provide access for all and achieve representation by making the distance out of education.

The NOUN, which is- largely Information Communication and Technology (1CT) based, aims at empowering and transforming the lives of the individuals, communities and societies by creatively and innovatively ameliorating the problems of access to education by the citizenry including the working class, housewives and the less privileged regardless of their location, occupation and other human dispositions so as to accelerate societal progress and development, and also decrease social inequalities through effective utilisation of the ICT systems and facilities; the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC)/ Distributed Open Online Learning (DROOL; the Open Education Resources (OER); and the Openup Education (OuE, facilities for teaching and learning. Perhaps due to difficulties in securing admission into the conventional universities, it has been discovered that well more than 50% of the NOUN students are found to be youth. According to Tenebe (2014), NOUN has been in .the fore front in the campaign for democratisation of educational opportunities in Nigeria. Hence, the vision and mission statement of the institution centre on the provision of highly accessible and enhanced quality education, anchored by social justice, equity, equality and national cohesion. More importantly, the NOUN motto is: work and learn. It has been noted that the NOUN happens to be the first African Open University to boost its services by embracing and committing its over 1650 pdf

course materials (learning materials) in its portal for transformation into the OER platform in its commitment and support for Open Education.

Generally, it is noteworthy to acknowledge the fact that effort is being made by successive governments to support access to education at all levels especially through the establishment of such agencies as: National Universities Commission(NUC) to crater for university education; National Commission for Colleges of Education(NCCE) to carter for teacher education at the colleges of education; National Board for Technical Education (NBTE)to carter for technical education at the polytechnics and mono-technics; National Commission for Nomadic Education(NCNE) for migrating herdsmen and fishermen; National Mass Education Commission (NMEC) to carter for provision of non-formal education for the youth and adults; National Commission for Universal Basic Education for primary and secondary education; etc. each monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the policies, programmes and curricula of the different programmes ran by the institutions under their mandate so as to ensure achievement of the vision, mission, goals and objectives establishing educational institutions and systems. Ideally, when properly implemented, these endeavours will no doubt lead to the actualisation of the goals of the National Policy on Education-NPE (Fed. Gov: 2009) which include having dignity of labour and egalitarian society. The NPE is to bring about the much more needed societal peace, progress, development and advancement. Some of the significant byproducts of these endeavours should be the promotion of self-reliance, dignity of labour, honesty, obedience, empathy, tolerance, self-respect, teamwork, national integration, youth empowerment, and consequently, peace, progress and sustainable development.

Challenges to Access to Information and Education for Peace and Sustainable Development

An assessment of the state-of- the- art of education provision in Nigeria especially as it relates to promotion of self-reliance, employment, innovation, peace, development and advancement in the country suggest that there are still many rivers to cross and hurdles to overcome. What are more apparent are contradicting policies and policy implementation. Chika (2014) remarked that 'the problem over the years has continued to be two-fold: it is either we are saddled with Ministers and policy-makers who have no idea of why they are there and what they are supposed to be doing or we have ones who have sights properly set on worthy goals and objectives but who are constrained by poor government funding attitude.' In like manner, it has been observed that the life ware of the tertiary institutions funding in Nigeria is the Tertiary Education Trust Fund-TETFund (formerly ETF) which idea was muted by the Academic Staff Union of Nigerian Universities (ASUU) during one of its nation-wide strikes that centred on poor funding, decaying infrastructure, dilapidated institutional laboratories and libraries and inappropriate remuneration of the staff of the country's universities.

Basically, there is nothing wrong in modelling and re-modelling of the national education systems and curricula to reflect those of other developed and progressive nations. What is worrisome and not encouraging is bring in beautifully conceived ideas from developed and progressive nations to impact some noticeable c, anges and innovations in the prevailing national education system, curricula and structure for the sake of it without accompanying vital variables and instruments such as provision for: adequate funding; qualified manpower requirement; human resource development scheme; teaching and learning infrastructure and facilities; functional libraries; pragmatically progressive curricula; and other matching necessities to enhance and ensure the achievement of the desired objectives for effective access to information and education. A case in point is the

introduction of semester system in the Nigeria tertiary education system and structure as against the seasonal system. There is yet to be a report of any tertiary institution in the country that is successfully implementing such semester system option accordingly without lamentations. In addition, what are tenable today are Polytechnics and Mono-technics, Colleges of Education (Technical) and Specialised Universities of Agriculture, Science and Technology competing favourably with the conventional ones in the admission and product of graduates in the humanities. Even then, due to paucity of the state-of-the-art functional libraries and laboratories, and other teaching and learning facilities which include chemicals and reagents as well as professionally qualified personnel, more theoretical knowledge are impacted on their products in the name of alternatives to practical. However, the state of libraries and library and information service delivery in the tertiary institutions is noticed to be gradually improving due to the annual special interventions funds received from the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) for library development.

The most unfortunate case which has continually eluded any attempt to eliminate or drastically reduce incidences of youth unemployment and self-reliance of the products of formal school system is the restructuring of the secondary system to eliminate the critical streams the primary school graduates could easily fit into. The popular slogan of 'catch them young ' has been negated and relegated to the background to the extent that the secondary schools' amiable streams abrogated included: Teachers Colleges for the training of primary school teachers; Commercial Colleges for teaching of business subjects as economics, book keeping, typing, shorthand alongside other subjects other than science subjects; Technical and Craft schools for education of skilled craftsmen and technicians in such critical areas as wood working, metal working, automobile technology, electrical technology, etc.; Grammar Schools/ Colleges/High/ Academy Schools for teaching of pure sciences to produce future scholars in such fields, eventually; Professional Schools such as Clerical Schools for production clerical staff(fortunately, schools of Nursing and Midwifery still survive). It is worth noting that those institutions were well equipped and staff with professionally qualified personnel in their chosen careers/disciplines. Like the unending virtuous calls to bring back the over 200 abducted Chibok Girls in the North East Nigeria, such school systems and programmes abrogated should be brought back for implementation without any further delay.

On the other hand, could the fore going situations in the so-called old system of schooling really apply to the so-to-say new improved present school systems in the country? As it were, the negative consequences of bad and inappropriate legislation; poor and undemocratic leadership; bad parenting; over-burdened curricula; negative influence of small messages system (SMS) texting on students' command of English Language; inadequate infrastructure such as teaching and learning resources; near absence of functional school libraries; insufficient teachers of Mathematics and English Language and in other core subjects; parents and teachers connivance to cheat during examinations; nonchalant attitudes of the teachers and students; presence of multitude half-baked teachers; students negative engagement with the new technologies such as the smart phones, iPads and social media networks used for entertainment, charting and gossiping rather than for learning; poor teacher remuneration; teaching staff's combining of business with teaching in school premises; etc. obtained in the current school systems have clearly manifested themselves clearly in the 2014 public examination of the West African Examination Council (WAEC) May/June West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) results. It recorded about 70% failure. Out of the 145,975 candidates, the results of about 1,750, 975 of them were withheld on ground of examination malpractice during both conduct and marking of the examinations. The analysis showed that out of

the 1,692,375 who sat for the examination only 529,479 of them passed with 5 credits including English and Mathematics giving a percentage score of 31.29% (Kuni Tyessi, et al:2014a).

It has also been observed that there will be 11 million Out-of School Children in 2014 and there is the need for 200,000 professionally qualified teachers in 2014 and 2015, and an additional 500,000 to curb the menace of mass failure in the secondary schools. In another dimension, the report of the study organised and funded by the UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office in collaboration with the national Offices in the region on All Children in Schools by 2015 under the Global Initiative on Out-of School Children (UNICEF-.2014) showed that the estimated: excluded children old enough to be in primary school in Nigeria is 8,825,705; excluded children old enough to be in lower secondary school is 2,597,331; Children at risk of exclusion from primary school is 3,258,953; and Children at risk of exclusion from lower secondary school is 352,783. The school exclusion factors identified include: Low household income; child labour(domestic or income support); size of family; early marriage and pregnancy; disabled children; parents' level of education; parents' role; death of one/both of the parents; children lack of motivation; children of divorced couples; children in care; gender of the household; discrimination against women; children accused of witchcraft; indigenous children; religion of the head of household; violence at home and in the community; adolescence; initiation and secret societies; school fees (legal and illegal); and lack of infrastructure. You need not agree more with me that these inequities and fallacies have significant impact on access to information and education for peace and sustainable development in Nigeria.

In like manner, the barriers and bottlenecks to education identified by the UNICEF(2014) study include: lack of teachers; distance of the school from home; lack of school textbooks; violence at school, in particular sexual harassment and sexual violence; educational programmes et practices; language of instruction; lack of capacities and poor-management; poor implantation of texts and reforms; insecurity, crisis and conflicts; poor partnership with civil society; insufficient budgetary funds; and lack of equity in allocation of fund. Although it has been noticed that e-Curriculum for public schools with soon be enthroned in the public schools to ameliorate shortage of texts for teaching and learning in the schools as well as democratise the education system (Kuni Tyessi: 2014b) however, considering the poor state of Internet infrastructure and bandwidth in the country; the level of ICT utilisation in the less privilege communities and societies; the epileptic electricity supply; the hidden costs of ICT usage and management; the poor socio- economic conditions of families especially in the rural areas; the scourge of youth unemployment; the decaying or near absence of quality teaching and learning facilities including libraries especially in the rural public schools; very low level of information and ICT literacy amongst the citizenry and so on, how effective and efficient the e-scheme will impact on the school system in the country might ignite more questions begging for answers.

Consequences of Nigerian Factors on Access to Information and Education for Peace and Sustainable Development

Going by what is continually being published on the pages of the national and international periodicals, in the national and international cable television networks broadcasts and documentaries, as well as what are being posted on other electronic media such as the Internet and the social media networks, they can be summed up to a simple and basic fact requiring no further evidences that the Nigerian nation is still increasingly neck deep experiencing the vagaries of:

- socio-political crisis;
- intimidation and harassment;
- administrative recklessness;
- political banditry and bigotry;
- social violence and hatred;
- bribery and corruption;
- terrorism and bloodshed;
- deliberate ethnic cleansing and neo-slavery;
- economic looting and mismanagement;
- political zealotry and rascality;
- ethno- religious conflicts and crisis;
- armed violence and genocide;
- armed robbery and banditry;
- human abduction and kidnapping;
- human trafficking and baby factory;
- unsteady and dive nosed economic development;
- continued dependence on and mishandling of foreign donations and assistance;
- overdependence on only one major source of financial revenue input for the nation;
- galloping youth unemployment and restiveness index; and
- sectoral over zealousness and tribal/racial nepotism; etc.

Considering the fore-goings, there no doubt in the fact it is urgent that there should be the need for peace to prevail and be sustained in the country to prevent the house from falling and allow the steady rolling of the stone to achieve the desired individual, communal, societal and national interests, goals and aspirations collectively and severally. By and large, peace ultimately serves as the viable avenue and constructive option for promotion and assurance of democratic systems and polity; social justice and freedom as well as socio- political and economic development and advancement of all the stakeholders, the community, society and the nation at large (Mohammed,Z:2014).

Promotion and Sustenance of Global Peace and Sustainable Development

Conceived as a state of stability, tranquillity and equilibrium in all human and material dispositions, peace is needed and to be sustained to ensure steady and uninterrupted individual, communal, societal, national and global development, progress and advancement in all spheres and dimensions of human endeavours and co-existence. There has been variety of peace movements such as the Pacifism in Europe, peace societies, peace workers and advocates and friend of peace whose basic aim has been to prevent war and ensure peace after the First and Second World Wars and during the cold war era between Europe and the Soviet Union.

It has been observed by Mohammed, Z(2014) that some of the other famous peace advocates for harmonious societal co-existence include the Late Carl Marx, Mao Tzekung , Lenin, Angels and their associates; Malcom X, Martin Luther King junior and their associates who fought for the rights of the black race in USA; the Late Mahatma Ghandi who advocated for non- violence while seeking for India's political freedom from Britain and promotion of equal rights and justice in the country; Later Bob Marley and his associate; and the late Nelson Mandela and his associate who fought for the

rights of the black race in South Africa; etc. In the same vain at the International level, the United Nations Organisation (UN) through the declarations and programmes of its various agencies/organs such as the General Assembly, Security Council, UNESCO, UNICEF, etc. is engaged in promoting and sustaining global peace.

Initiatives for Information and Education Access for Peace and Sustainable Development

Much is required in the promotion and support for peace initiatives and sustainable development through access to information and quality education in Nigeria. Such initiatives should include: provision for solid platform for professionalism especially at the tertiary education levels; provision for appropriate quality teaching and learning facilities and environments; provision of functional libraries and information centres; assurance of quality and healthy students; inclusion of information and ICT literacy in the education curriculum at all levels of educational attainment; provision for quality assurance mechanism in the education system at all levels; provision for youth empowerment and self-reliance skills acquisition and Entrepreurship education at all levels; provision for ethics and moral value acquisition; provision for acquisition of peace and conflict resolution skills and competences; revalidation of curriculum content to reflect pragmatic application of psychomotor, cognitive and affective skills and competences in knowledge acquisition; provision adequate professionally competent and qualified teaching and laboratory staff; promotion of good governance in education management; promotion and support for student-centred learning approaches; promotion and support for effective application of ICTs in teaching and learning at all levels of education attainment; promotion and support for all inclusive system of education; provision and support for differently abled persons education and knowledge acquisition; promotion and support for networking and collaborations in teaching, learning and research; promotion and support for gender mainstreaming in education attainment; provision for back to school loans and scholarships; provision for social security and protection mechanisms; provision for health nutrition initiates; etc.

Library and Information Services Initiatives for Peace and Sustainable Development

According to Mohammed, Z. (2014), the basic goal of any library and information service, regardless of the type of library and information centre setup and proprietor, is to facilitate and support access and utilisation of information and information resources irrespective of their types, formats, access time and location of the target customers. Within the frame work of the UNESCO Information For All (IFA) programme; the IFLA Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom at its 75th conference anniversary ; the ambit of Inclusive Services Provision Environment; and within the context of information profession ethics and principles of Impartiality, independence and integrity, library and information services initiatives for promotion and sustenance of peaceful co-existing and sustainable development can be provided to facilitate information and knowledge acquisition, enhance understanding of the society and global trends and effectively utilise opportunities and collaborative efforts and initiatives.

Library and information services initiatives should aim at:

- ✓ closing ranks in-between and among identified societal gaps and divisions;
- ✓ disadvantaged and despaired citizenry;
- ✓ promotion of human equality, justice and civil rights;

- ✓ reduction of poverty health diseases;
- ✓ protection of environmental degradation;
- ✓ reduced gender disparity,
- ✓ promotion of mutual respect among the citizenry;
- ✓ promotion of socio-political and economic emancipation and participation;
- ✓ reduced socio-political and economic risks,
- ✓ ethno- religious and racial violence, crisis, tension and conflict;
- ✓ enhanced quality of life;
- ✓ promoting and enhancing mutual understanding, acceptance and tolerance amongst the citizenry;
- ✓ collaboration and cooperation;
- ✓ promotion and sustenance of all initiatives and programmes in support of patience, tolerance, dialogue, reconciliation, concessions and consensus building in-between/among antagonising stakeholders, etc.

To this effect, libraries and information centres have to continually assume the role of:

- information service providers and interpreters;
- information watch dog and gatekeepers;
- information service diplomats, managers and policy makers;
- information provision and access bridge builders;
- information peace promoters and mediators;
- information service entertainers and advertisers;
- information editors and auditors;
- information resource providers and social marketers ; and
- above all, be change ambassadors and transformers for peace building, conflict prevention and societal overall development and advancement.

More often than not, individuals, people, community and indeed the society can change for good due to effects and impacts of access to information and education especially through:

- o real life situations;
- o representation of new ideas;
- o Additional training, knowledge and experiences;
- o research findings and experimentations;
- o logic of reasoning;
- o availability of requisite resources and commensurate rewards;
- o role modelling and resonance; and
- o inability and capacity to resistance forces of change.

The strategic approach for library and information service initiatives for peaceful societal co-existence, conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peace building and sustainable development should aim at changing and moulding the stakeholder's:

- ✓ Cognition;
- ✓ Orientation;
- ✓ Ethical and Moral Values;

- ✓ Attitude; and
- ✓ Behaviour

towards embracing peace, harmony, progress and development willingly by their own volition devoid of any form of threat, manipulation, persuasion, compulsion or a combination of them. Toward this end, the application of library and information service provision doctrine and philosophy anchored on effective information management and translated within the context of strategic information gathering, processing, preservation and dissemination is critical and instructive. National unity, peace and development can be better strengthened , sustained and promoted through provision of economically, socially, politically, culturally, health and security related information resources and services.

In order to create library and information service initiatives critical mass for effective peace building, conflict prevention and development in the society, all the peace-oriented information services approaches should target:

- ➢ the key role players and policy makers;
- ➢ the generality/ masses;
- ➢ Traditional and Community leaders;
- ➢ Trade Unions and Civil Right Activists;
- ➢ Civil Servants and Technocrats;
- ➢ Heads of Public and Private Establishments;
- ➢ the less privileged including the differently abled;
- ➢ political class;
- ➢ cultural, social and formal groups;
- ➢ academic and professional communities; and
- ➢ Students' Unions and Youth Movements; etc.

Some of the activities libraries and information centres may engage in for promotion and sustenance of peace, prevention of conflict and sustainable development in the society should include:

- ➢ awareness raising project,
- ➢ provision of conducive environment for round table discussion, dialogue, mediation, negotiation and training;
- ➢ mounting of exhibitions on topical conflict and crisis issues and management;
- ➢ collaboration with other related print and electronic information service providers for peace promotion , conflict prevention and development;
- ➢ provision of variety of current information resources and services to educate and enhance the stake holder's understanding of the implications of conflicts, crisis, peace and development;
- ➢ establishment of social media network for meaningful comments and exchange of ideas, opinions on contemporary topical issues among the stakeholders;
- ➢ application of the state-of-the-art Information and Communication Technologies(ICTs) for library and information services delivery;
- ➢ establishment of viable Internet connectivity;
- ➢ creation and hosting of Internet website/page/linkages for easy information transfer, access and utilisation by the relevant customers;

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